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THE POLITICAL HISTORY
OF
JOHN BULL;
OR,
THE TRUE ENGLISHMAN,
NEITHER A REPUBLICAN NOR AN ARISTOCRAT.

————— I know their political juggling,
Things which startle Reason, and make me deem
Not this, nor that, but every Constitution false.

ADDRESSED BY JOHN BULL
TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM PITT.

ALSO,
REMARKS
ON THE PRESENT STATE OF THE ELECTIVE
POWER OF THE PEOPLE,
AND
THE CONSTITUTION OF PARLIAMENT,
WITH PROPOSITIONS FOR ACCOMPLISHING AN EQUAL AND ADE-
QUATE REPRESENTATION OF
THE COMMONS OF GREAT-BRITAIN
IN PARLIAMENT,
AND
A CONSTITUTIONAL MODE OF REFORM.

BY THOMAS BROUGHTON.

Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to
find Talk and Discourse, but to weigh and consider. BACON.

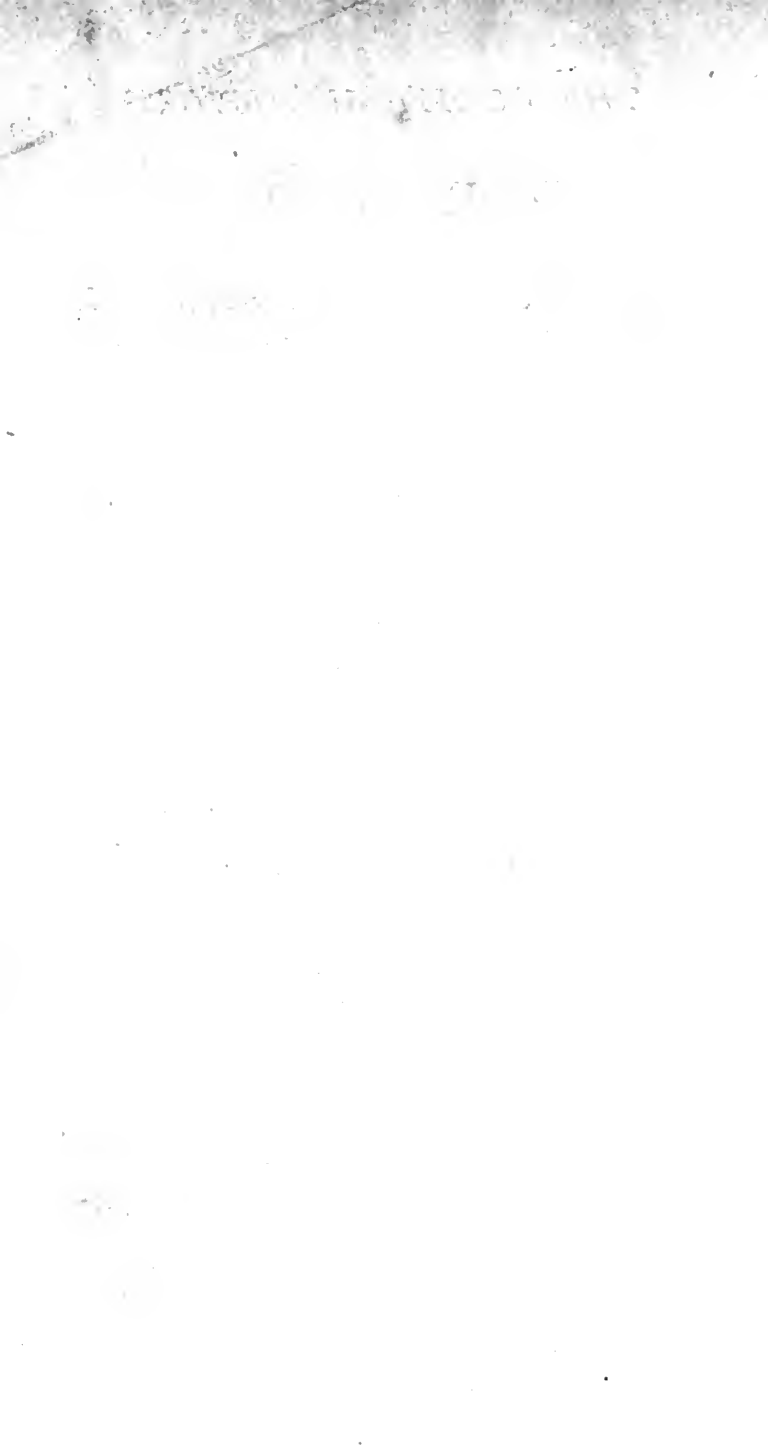
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HARDING

AS the observations contained in the following Papers were made prior to the recent debate in the House of Commons on the necessity of a Parliamentary Reform, and before a number of independent Gentlemen associated to effect that grand purpose, it is but a just tribute to the patriotism and respectability of those real friends of the people to observe, that they answer the description, both in principles and worth, of those truly independent characters, who are here represented as the only proper persons to effect this essential measure. And as they wisely proceed on constitutional grounds, they merit the unanimous support of the whole nation; that these are my humble, unbiassed sentiments, will, I trust, be proved from the freedom of the following casual remarks; in which it will appear that JOHN BULL is neither a Ministerialist nor Anti-ministerialist, nor Whig nor Tory.

Tory. He cannot reconcile the idea of a division of the common interest: he is convinced the very name of Party augurs a hostile intention against his liberties; and after much conversation we had together on this subject, it was with infinite concern on his part he concluded, that he could not look up with confidence to either side for the support of his real interest: he was afraid that those who avowedly opposed Ministers in every measure were in pursuit of the Hesperian Garden; and if they could slay the dragon, they would take possession of the golden fruit, and notwithstanding all their fair promises, still leave him in the lurch. He had no hopes left; secret and corrupt influence had thrown a contempt on patriotism, and established a paradoxical system, wherein integrity and abilities were considered as hostile, and cunning and treachery alone found favour; and he had now no other alternative than to encourage the union of independent country gentlemen and citizens to obtain a
free

free and equal representation, that practical Government might combine with the admirable theory of his Constitution. He was a plain Englishman, unhacknied in the arts of managing a Parliament or a Party; but inflexibly determined to maintain the free operation of his Constitution with his life and fortune. This he wished might be understood to be a principle he drew in with his breath; it lived with him, and could only be annihilated with his person. As for myself, who am but the humble vehicle of his sentiments, I beg leave to observe, if in the generous ardor of liberty, and the sincere reverence for a Constitution established by the wisdom of successive ages, some propositions and terms should escape me of too positive a nature, every true friend to constitutional liberty will put a liberal construction on every attempt to defend those principles, which, for this last century, have attracted the admiration, as well as excited the envy of all Europe; and every such friend to our Constitution will overlook the

animated manner a free discussion of its abuses demands, as an unavoidable effect of the true spirit of liberty. It is therefore with deference and respect I appeal to the understanding of every reader, that if my expressions on the abuse in the National Representation, which is the leading subject of investigation, should appear to be conveyed with too much fervor, I hope to find an apology in their own feelings. At the same time I am conscious, that neither satire can influence the candid and impartial, nor warmth of expression convince the better informed. My object will be accomplished, if my endeavours shall induce one from the many better qualified to resume a subject the most important to every Briton.

THOMAS BROUGHTON.

August 8th, 1792.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM PITT.

SIR,

THE language of flattery is grateful to the ear; and though it conveys an insult to the sense, the understanding applauds the sacrifice, and deals to it both favour and friendship. But the voice of sincerity frequently conveys a sting which wounds the pride of self-love; and notwithstanding the displeasure it excites, is palliated by the inward conviction of its truth; a real friend is too often considered in the light of an enemy. These prefatory remarks disclose to you my intention; which, as a man loyal to his King, and zealous in the support of the civil and religious liberties confirmed at the Revolution, duty rather imposes than choice dictates, the detailing of vices which are growing on the Constitution.

I lament

I lament that you, Sir, formed by nature and education for eminence, adorned with the best private virtues, and graced with abilities early matured by your immortal father, should become a sacrifice to *Borough traffic*. But I more than lament, that a Constitution in its component parts so well constructed, in its effect so aptly designed for public prosperity and private happiness, should in its Democratic part, by that traffic, labour under an Aristocratic gangrene.

In your integrity your friends may place a confidence; but individual rectitude, cannot stem the contagion of former Administrations. Abuses are too fresh in the public mind to induce it to repose implicitly in a fallible man. The wisdom of past ages has given to posterity the independence of Parliament as the sacred palladium of British liberty. But this bulwark of freedom is held by so precarious a tenure, that for many years past the absolute necessity of a Reform in the National
 Re-

Representation has refounded from every quarter of the kingdom. The rights of the people demand an equal and free representation. On this point the collected wisdom of the nation centers. The great majority of people are impressed with one sentiment, "That the Constitution is a glorious fabric." But the chief pillar of its support has been for years decaying; the stamina is contaminated; the freedom of election is perverted, and by that perversion the Constitution of Parliament is violated. It is this corrupted part of the Constitution that affords to republicanism a triumph. It is this which gives to faction a form and figure.

Painful as the conviction of these facts are in the breast of every true Englishman, yet the sacred maxim of his Constitution, which gives a remedy when a right is invaded, exalts his mind to its true dignity, that with an equanimity which equality and justice only produces, he can look up to power with a resolution

solution which will triumph over oppression, and maintain his rights. No one act, therefore, can you atchieve that will enhance your name so much with posterity, as to meet the times with a temperate reform. This is the great crisis of your public career ; your patriotism and your reputation are at issue ; embrace the tide now flowing to immortal honour ; the wishes, the endeavours, and the interests of the sober, independent part of the nation are with you ; face the enemy in the first instance, and the levelling hydra will sink into oblivion ; it gains strength from your fears ; it merely exists by the delay of a measure which will *conciliate all disaffection*, preserve the texture and genius of our happy constitution, and redound to the honour of the first free kingdom in the world.

These, Sir, are the sentiments of a loyal people ; men impressed with the love of their country ; men whose ardent wishes are to draw from the wholesome statutes of the land
 their

their pristine vigour, whose efforts will be to maintain the energy of their representation.

In reply to this it will be alledged, and I am ready to meet the hacknied assertions, that it is much easier to complain than to remedy; that materials are easily found, but defects are not so readily supplied. Innovations are hurtful, operating on particulars, they excite prejudice. Let us not touch the basis, lest the breath of anarchy should dissipate the fabric. Such ignoble sentiments on a constitutional necessary measure, if not interested, are unworthy of an enlightened people, and degrade a free nation; all ranks of people reverence royalty; every true Englishman will support the Crown; but there is not a man but knows the Crown has no longer any analogy to liberty than as the representatives of the people are independent, and the Parliament free.

If my respect surmounted my duty, I might have forborn to have reminded you of your
illustrious

illustrious father. May the filial remembrance of him stimulate you to this glorious pursuit. The establishing of constitutional liberty on its true foundation is worthy of honour; it will acquire you immortal fame. Permit me to say, it is your duty to set at defiance the Aristocratic party in the House of Commons. Your first engagement was to promote and effect a reform in Parliament.

The olive branch now courts the laurel; remove therefore the mask from the Genius of the Constitution, and the nation will entwine your brow with the emblems of liberty. Recorded honours will hover round your name. The disappointed levellers may cavil at your success; but future ages will engrave your virtues on marble. Animated with a true zeal for the real interests of the kingdom,

I am,

Right Honourable SIR,

Your Friend,

JOHN BULL.

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THE
POLITICAL HISTORY
OF
JOHN BULL.

SECTION I.

A brief Sketch of the Character of JOHN BULL, with a prefatory Dialogue, containing Remarks on the Republican and Aristocratic Doctrines of the Day.

AS a man cannot in all cases speak of himself without the imputation of vanity, it may be necessary first to premise the character of JOHN BULL. A favourable prepossession, which engages the heart, and attaches the mind, is a favourable circumstance, which, though not always within our reach, merits our utmost endeavours to attain. If this attempt should fail, it must be attributed to a deficiency of talents in the author justly to delineate his worthy appelland. For if generous principles display the dignity of man, John Bull by Nature possesses the best gifts of Heaven; philanthropy ennobles his heart, and inspires his mind with the most liberal sentiments;

in which courage and charity contending for eminence, honour interfered, and united them. Dignified as he is in disposition, yet he is too credulous, which arises from those principles of security he had early imbibed from his excellent Constitution; and all his views and designs are marked with that open frankness, that manly assurance and dignity of conduct, which so particularly distinguish him from the natives of arbitrary States. A combination of such noble qualities naturally produces a temper which is superior to faction; with contemptuous disdain he looks on, while Envy is biting her lips, and Ambition is treading the air. But when Injustice unites her iron hand, and tramples on his rights, he exerts himself with that energy and effect which have ever distinguished his patriotic measures, and will always preserve his freedom. Such being the general traits of his character, it cannot be expected his plain language will accord with the sophistry of interested politicians. On the contrary, perceiving a regular progression of immorality, which threatens his Constitution; keeping pace with fashion, folly, and luxury, John Bull will have his rights asserted in a true English style; in which if a dash of eccentricity so congenial with his nature should appear, his sound principles and good intentions must apologize. Agreeable to his engagement, he now visited me; and after the usual congratulations, we entered on business.

John Bull. If you are, Sir, a plain lettered man, and free from the bias of party, I shall not be disappointed having engaged you to assert my rights.

The Author. Really, Sir, I had no reason to expect that honour from a man of your importance, having no claim on the world for possessing that humble talent; neither should I venture to assume such a claim, but on so plain subject as your rights. By trade I know you to be a dealer in facts; I shall be proud, therefore, to transcribe your ledger, and draw out your bills on your debtors. To party I am unknown, and by the Constitution, free; under your protection, I may then venture with confidence; at least my best endeavours will be to defend the Constitution, and merit your approbation.

John Bull. The privilege of speaking truth being denied, her sacred value is lost; and the tongue tortured by restraint, or interest, seeks the colours of sophistry to shade the dictates of the heart. Hence the variety of opinions on the simple theme of liberty keeps pace with the growth of politicians, to which the French Revolution has afforded a fruitful season. For here I find a Republican leveling his predatory principles against me; and there an Aristocrat endeavouring to strangle me. And for this long time past, I have been put in fear of my life; and without a transfusion of new blood into my veins, I shall not be able to withstand

their attacks ; for I find my Constitution much impaired by infractions made on it in my youth ; and my infirmities have much increased since the paralytic stroke, which deprived me of my voice in St. Stephen's Chapel, where for many years past I have sat as an inanimate idol in the Oracle of Delphi, to sanction the previous resolutions of the Priests of a Council. But perceiving there are now two parties, both enemies to the health of my Constitution, the one pulling the cords or stamina of my existence at one end, and the other pulling at the other, I am determined to make good my hold, to prevent their breaking ; for my ancestors left me this sacred axiom—" That we should all pull together, and form three separate pillars for the support " of ONE GRAND FABRIC," which I am bound sacredly to maintain. But the regaining of my public voice being absolutely necessary to assure my right to collateral aid and equal benefit, I shall depute you to assert my privileges, and respectfully suggest to the Higher Powers a mode of Reform in my Representation. Be candid and impartial ; we have but one interest ; we can have but one wish. It is the birth-right of Englishmen to keep the British Oak of Liberty free from corrosions. Let it be our pride, as it is our duty, that posterity may find it flourishing in the greatest splendour.

The Author. Indeed, Sir, you utter your complaints with so much emphasis, I find you have
already

already made some advance on my feelings. I shall beg to propose, that we make our joint remarks on popular topics in this Section; during the course of which I shall have an opportunity of catching your style; and also that your complaints, your interests, and your rights, may make such an impression on me, that when I write the dictates of your heart, I may find them equally accord with the sentiments of my own mind. This is actually necessary before I can make remarks on your political history.

John Bull. What flows from the dictates of the heart men in general admire, which can only be attributed to sympathy; for, on fixed principles, you will find theory and practice at continual variance. But the heart, though involved in every intricate evolution of the mind, still retains the human bias.

The Author. Philosophy and liberty, it is said, are inseparable; and certainly it would reflect a censurable stupidity in me not to admire and congratulate you on their progress. And shall it now be said the present age must still wear the garment of Liberty with that tattered appendage of Norman rigour, the Borough Representation, because we have not a Justinian to rescind it? Let the ignoble thought be banished, and the British Constitution be purified.

John Bull. A great political character says, we cherish our prejudices because they are prejudices. Under this idea, I imagine, he termed the people a swinish multitude. This pillar of hereditary rights and arbitrary claims will eventually find a free State the wrong market for his principles; it being my will to rouse from patriotic apathy, and examine if indolence and supineness have not occasioned a breach in the bulwark of our freedom; and probably in the sting of disaffection may be found a truth, which being embraced may preserve the spirit of the Constitution.

The Author. However we may differ from the principles of disaffected writers, we are not to disregard some truths which they convey. But it is become a fashion among men to despise truth, because it affects their pride; and a man is equally a depredator, whether he attacks another's purse or his pride; so the law construes truth, which Nature ordained the fountain of virtue; but now it is become the libellous pander of Justice.

John Bull. Let the lawyers torture words, and dissect Acts of Parliament, keep to the letter of my constitutional right, and deal freely with the Republican and Aristocratic doctrines of the day; and if it should appear to have a tendency rather to amuse the mind than to convince the judgment, let it be remembered, if satire be ever in the least allowable,

allowable, it is when it has for its object Vice, and for its end Truth.

The Author. A man may certainly venture to hold up the mirror of Truth under your patronage, particularly when the chief object is his country's benefit; and if from the result of our investigation abuses should appear, it becomes the duty of Government to apply immediate and effectual remedies.

John Bull. Abuses exist which require neither science nor ingenuity to explore.

The Author. And from those abuses have arisen our enormous national debt, which hangs a dead weight from the neck of Britannia. Yet her sons make a figure, as if she were mounted in a golden car. These are glittering days!

John Bull. Public credit keeps them floating on the tide, where, if they would attend to my voice, they should continue to be wafted, but not till an ebb takes place will they listen to me.

The Author. And by a new philosophy *, this enormous debt is declared to be a great national

* See the Essays of the Marquis de Casaux and George Crawford, which proceed upon the idea that it is absurd and injurious to attempt to diminish the national debt.

bleffing ; for as neceffity is the parent of invention, speculation has now arrived to the very fummit of perfection. The tax-gatherers give a fpur to induftry ; they quicken the genius, and mature the invention of a whole family ; they give energy to trade, life to commerce, and fpirit to the whole nation. One novelty fucceeds another, till curiofity is loft in a maze. Medical men, for inftance, have added fome hundred drugs to the *Materia Medica*, hitherto unknown, whofe virtues are grand fpecifics. Indeed, the knowledge of Galen and Hippocrates is wholly exploded by the deep reſearches of modern advertiſing empirics of health—Paint, Patch, and Perfume.

John Bull. I will venture to impart a ſecret to you. Theſe grand fpecifics poſſeſs two virtues ; the firſt enables them to ſet up a chariot and make a figure, and the ſecond enables them to pay the taxes which ſupport the national debt.

The Author. Which fully prove Neceffity to be the parent of Invention. The tax-gatherers, again, have in an amazing degree ſharpened the wits of the lawyers, who are now become ſupremely ſpeculative. They can ſoon convince a man that a light pair of heels is better than a ſafe conſcience. For if he brings in a *fat* cauſe into court, notwithstanding he may have reaſon and truth on his ſide, yet they immediately throw it into the ſcale of ſelf-interest ;

interest; and to incline the balance in their favour, they torture, slice, and trim the letter of the law, till he is fixed with enormous costs, and then he must either run or pay.

John Bull. Taxes must be paid; the national debt must be supported.

The Author. The tax-gatherers have also thrown a new light on trade. First, the bankers, to support needy tradesmen, oppressed with taxes, and the consequent advance of the articles of life, discount the manufactured paper of those who are of fair fame. Secondly, the wholesale traders encourage young men to set up retailers, without capitals, who have the repute of having been sober and steady assistants to eminent traders. These are necessary connexions to support fictitious paper, and create large returns. Hence the numerous accommodations, from the lowest mechanic to the highest merchant; hence the increase of country banks; hence the increase of attornies; hence the increase of brokers; and, finally, hence the increase of bankrupts.

John Bull. Taxes must be paid; the national debt must be supported.

The Author. The tax-gatherers rout out the lower class of people from their peaceful habitations, and the
the

the advance of common necessaries induce them to forsake honest avocations. Hence the increase of swindlers, mail-robbers, highwaymen, pickpockets, &c. hence the aggrandizement of the colony of Botany Bay to our antient kingdom, and the rapid increase of its population.

John Bull. Taxes must be paid; the national debt must be supported.

The Author. Your replies being so uniform, you are certainly of opinion the morality of the people is the least consideration, when the public good is to be consulted. I may reckon you a disciple of Mandeville, who affirms, that private vices are public benefits. The taxes must be paid undoubtedly; but by what means can public credit be secured?

John Bull. By the brokers keeping up the price of stocks*, notwithstanding it gives the advantage to foreigners to buy and sell to our wrong.

* The spirit of stock-jobbing is to the spirit of trade what the spirit of faction is to the spirit of liberty. The tendency of both is to advance the interest of a few worthless individuals, at the expence of the whole community. The consequence of both, if ever they prevail to the ruin of trade and liberty, must be, that the harpies will starve in imaginary wealth, and that the children of faction, like the iron race of Cadmus, will destroy one another.

Bolingbroke's Remarks, Hist. Eng. p. 169.

But

But this was an unnecessary remark ; for if we are reduced to the last guinea, we have an ample supply of Bank and other paper.

The Author. A fortunate resource to support public credit.

John Bull. As the national debt increased, public credit advanced. It may therefore be very dangerous to remain long at peace ; for the increase of commerce and wealth might reduce the national debt, and consequently lower our credit.

The Author. The national debt then is a great blessing ; it is the basis of public credit, and must not be reduced.

John Bull. Again, another weighty consideration. Why, it may be very dangerous to remain long at peace. Inglorious wars and armaments have happily created a number of public offices, and provided for a host of excisemen, commissaries, contractors, agents, &c. besides placemen and pensioners, and a standing army. If the increase of commerce and wealth is not checked by a war, the national debt will be reduced, and we may unfortunately have all these men thrown on the public, and our credit lowered.

The Author. That would be a great national evil, indeed.

John Bull. We have dared Spain; we have strained at Ruffia; and for the maintenance and promotion of the officers of the Crown, the army and navy, and the support of public credit, it does not appear that we can fairly exist another twelve-month without an actual war.

The Author. Reduction is a more formidable word than war; it conveys a greater trepidation than to be drafted on a hazardous siege. A long peace will bring us into this dilemma. The national debt is a great blessing; it is the basis of public credit, and must not be reduced.

John Bull. Very fortunately, the present war in India keeps up the spirit of the nation, affords to speculation her vital matter, and supports the new philosophy you speak of, which declares, that as our burthens increase, and the national debt is augmented, we grow in wealth and prosperity, and enjoy every blessing.

The Author. A most fortunate circumstance to support public credit.

John Bull. After an indulgence of other people's opinions, I may be permitted to give my own private one.

The Author. That will afford me pleasure, as I am sure it will be ingenuous.

John Bull. First, I consider public credit naturally draws with it and promotes private credit. As the nation, therefore, has gone to extraordinary lengths, by mortgaging to support inglorious and expensive wars, the age has become gay, showy, false, and flattering. Fictitious and other paper money creates a deceptive appearance, and gives a false colour to property, which promotes luxury, and luxury increases the growth of effeminacy and vice, which induce men to treat religion as a chimera; and this is the first step to corrupt the morals, and ruin the State.

Secondly, Public credit being wholly dependant, and combined with the executive power, and every year becoming aggrandized*, we are, by luxury, immorality, and neglect of patriotism, gra-

* The instruments of power are not perhaps so open and avowed as they formerly were, and therefore are the less liable to jealous and invidious reflections, but they are not the weaker upon that account. In short, our national debt and taxes, besides the inconveniences before mentioned, have also in their natural consequences thrown such a weight of power into the executive scale of Government, as we cannot think was intended by our patriot ancestors, who gloriously struggled for the abolition of the then formidable parts of the prerogative, and by an unaccountable want of foresight, established this system in their stead.

Blackst. Comment. vol. I. p. 387.

dually

dually sliding into that arbitrary state from which France has recently wrested herself. She once before was free, and enjoyed her three independent Estates. But from the baneful practice of corruptly influencing the representatives of the people, they became, by the aggrandizement of the Crown, consolidated into an absolute power*.

The Author. Your arguments fully convince me of the necessity of reclaiming your elective power. The national debt having created so many new offices and new places of every description, which, being entirely at the pleasure of the Crown, has given to the Executive Power a proportion of weight so far superior to the other constituent parts, that it may fairly be said to hold the scales of the Constitution in its hand; or, in other words, the legislative body at its devotion, of which collusion Montesquieu foretells the loss of our freedom. “As all human things,” he observes, “must

* *Mem. Philip de Comines—Duplex Mezray*—By exerting all his powers and address in influencing the elections of representatives, by bribing and over-awing the members, and by various changes which he artfully made in the form of her deliberations. Lewis the Eleventh acquired such entire direction of the national assemblies, that from being the vigilant guardians of the privileges and property of the people, he rendered them tamely subservient in protecting the odious measures of his reign. *Phil. de Comines, vol. I.* He first taught other modern Princes the fatal art of becoming arbitrary, by corrupting the fountain of public liberty.

“ have

“ have an end, the State we are speaking of will
 “ lose its liberty. It will perish when the legisla-
 “ tive power shall become more corrupt than the
 “ executive *.”

John Bull. It is too evident the national debt, by thus strengthening the Crown, has destroyed that equilibrium, which, by the Constitution is placed in the representatives of the people, by influencing a majority, independent of the elective power of their constituents. If I wanted a proof to substantiate this fact, I need but recur to the late Russian armament. When it was notorious that this equilibrium was lost, the general sentiment was made known through the medium of the press. It was this censorian privilege which wrested liberty from the hands of power. It is this palladium of our rights which explores the secrets of the Cabinet, and keeps magistrates and ministers within the line of duty, which penetrates the vibrations of the heart, and holds up to public view its evolutions.

The Author. Indeed, John Bull, you grow on me. Every sentence convinces me of the necessity of a Parliamentary Reform.

John Bull. When I speak of a standing majority, it may be necessary to discriminate between those

* Montesquieu.

acts which may be termed partial and personal, such as the Slave Trade and the Impeachment, and those public measures which gall the nation, and involve the whole body of people, such as armaments and wars. In these I have no voice. Dragged to battle like a slave against my will, and in return have my property taxed to maintain the dignity of the nation, or, in other words, the pampered pride of Treasurers, Paymasters, Agents, Commissaries, Commissioners, Contractors, Placemen and Pensioners, and other necessary evils, in a right cause, although right or wrong they uniformly support the Executive Power, and their yearly increase becomes a subject of just apprehension to the people. If there be any public virtue to be found in the nation, or a real and sincere regard for the permanency of an excellent Constitution, free elections and frequent new Parliaments will be obtained, to counteract that system of immoral policy, which was brought to maturity by a Minister *, who styled himself, *No Saint, No Spartan, No Reformer*, who treated public virtue as a bubble, and love of the country as a farce; and whose system of packed majorities, so pernicious to the liberties of the people, was practised throughout the American war. The venal and flagitious collusions of men in office under Government at various times, shew how notoriously I have been

* Sir Robert Walpole.

duped. One packed majority to grant millions drawn from my pockets, and another packed majority to drown my voice when I demand an explanation how those millions have been applied, millions to this day remaining unaccounted for to the public *. Redress and Reform were the two grand objects which possessed Mr. Pitt's mind when he entered into office; two subjects worthy of his superior merits. He made some advances which reflect a degree of honour, but having been long silent in these meritorious pursuits, I am induced to draw conclusions that eclipse those abilities which so conspicuously shone forth for patriotic splendour. His integrity to the public is bound by his early promises to effect a Parliamentary Reform. May his public virtues become as conspicuous as his private, by reiterating his endeavours for this essential measure.

The Author. If the obstacles to a Reform are remote from him, it is a duty he owes to the people and to himself to undeceive their confidence—He will be left to no choice between his duty and reputation, for it is no new axiom in politics, That a people may be abridged of their Liberties, and the constituent parts of Government be violated, consistently with the extension of commerce and

* See the petition of the Freeholders of Middlesex, 1769—repeated in an Address to his Majesty by Mr. Pitt, 1783.

the increase of wealth. The ancient Grecian and Roman States prove, that, in all free Governments as luxury increases the spirit of liberty decreases. The truths asserted in your last arguments are irresistible ; and I must confess I now feel myself properly influenced to assert your right to a free representation. But, first, it may be useful to make some remarks on the contending enemies of the Constitution, whose erroneous principles cannot be rendered too general, as the more universally they are known, it acquires the greater security. The republican champion has indulged an intemperate and misplaced ridicule, by attacking kings in their least defensible part, as individuals and men divested of magistracy, and by delineating a specious form of Government, and insinuating its purity, in order to conceal the republican poison which he in vain endeavours to instill into the minds of the people.

John Bull. Let us take care how we are carried away with sounds. The republican doctrine is an inflammatory theme, which militates against our Constitution. Its purposes are too evident ; it is to set aside our Supreme Magistrate, in whose perfect safety the very existence of our Constitution depends. And further, it is for levelling all distinctions in society, and destroying all those barriers which preserve peace and order in a state.

The Author. When he declaims against monarchy, he artfully makes no distinction between a tyrannical Government, wherein the Monarch's will is the supreme law, and a limited Monarchy such as ours, wherein the supremacy is lodged in the legislative authority created by the community. His arguments in no instance apply to our monarchical form of Government, it being a maxim of the Constitution, *That the King can do no wrong.*

“ He is ours
 “ T' administer, to guard, to adorn the State,
 “ But not to warp or change it.”

For by the Constitution he has appointed a Privy Council, which has the guidance of the executive power; and Ministers of the Crown are amenable to the representatives of the people, who can impeach and punish evil counsellors. Hence the equilibrium of the Constitution is so happily poised, that the will of the One Supreme must coalesce with the wills of the many who obey.

John Bull. If there be such a mutual check of one constituent part on the other, why is unlimited confidence so much debated for? It appears to cover a mystery which I conjecture to be an imposition on our Constitution.

The Author. Unlimited confidence as naturally arises from the abuse of your representation, as honour among men who live by depredation.

The pride of office bravely dares the constitutional few, conscious that the venal tribe have deposited their integrity for their places and their views of patronage. This or that Minister is no more censurable on the general established practice than the Grand Viziers. It is the perversion of your elective power grown upon your excellent Constitution since the Revolution, and which requires only resolution and integrity in the national body to remedy.

John Bull. The truth of which is too palpable; nevertheless, to define the limits of confidence is a matter of no small difficulty.

The Author. They are truly ascertained in the complex structure of your constitution, whose powers acting reciprocally one upon the other, produce a political machine, the most beautiful and correct that ever was devised by the wisdom of man. The theory of it has for its basis the laws of God and Nature, general liberty, and universal justice. The independent opposition of its constituent parts, judiciously applying to each other for its free administration to the people, is its vital principle; and this proves it to be a monument of human perfection, participating of the immutable laws of matter, which act by opposition to produce a certain good. A thunder storm may menace destruction like the American war; yet Aurora
from

from the East once more ushers in the gladdened day, and all Nature again rejoices.

John Bull. Thus we have revived, which shews there is a solid principle in the machine which works its own deliverance.

The Author. In the theory of the Constitution that principle is to be found; but in the instance alluded to, the theory of the Constitution was wholly lost sight of by the abuse in your representation; and we owe much of our deliverance to a fortunate and singularly happy, because it will ever be found a permanent circumstance—the insular and local situation of this kingdom. But to return to our strictures on this republican. His principles applied to this country are an exception to common sense. The people of England will ever look back to the commonwealth of the last century; and reflecting on the anarchy and destruction of civil liberty at that period, will finally reject principles which tend to the same issue, principles which, renouncing subordination, create dissensions; and as they sow jealousies, they nurse vicious ambition, an intemperate spirit of dominion succeeds, power demurs against equity, and the once liberal Cosmopolite, the free Republican, becomes the haughty, arbitrary Aristocrat.

John Bull. By his last publication, he seems to possess all the novelty of a prophet, without a mission; the theory of his heart is vanity, the practice of it presumption. Mark his own words. “ I have not only contributed to raise a New Empire in the world, founded on a new system of Government; but I have arrived at an eminence in political literature, the most difficult of all lines to succeed and excel in.”—“ I neither read books, nor studied other people’s opinions.”—“ I thought for myself. Independence is my happiness; and I view things as they are, without regard to place or person.”—“ My country is the world; my religion to do good.”—“ Speaking for myself, my parents were not able to give me a shilling, except towards my education, yet I possess more of what is called consequence in the world, than any one in Mr. Burke’s catalogue of Aristocrats*.”

The Author. The man who vainly puffs himself off, I am convinced is the last to obtain your confidence. Though he may be actuated by a laudable motive, the liberty of mankind, yet his principles are so predatory, his speculations so vague, that moderate men, who compose the sober and solid part of the nation, are shocked, and men who exist by the means of Government laugh in

* Egotisms in the Second Part of *The Rights of Man.*

their sleeve to find him but the mere offspring of faction, darting a poison which wastes itself in the air before it reaches them.

John Bull. I have read, and formed a judgment not very easily to be shaken: I am in consequence fully convinced there is no nation in the world whose laws breathe more of the true spirit of freedom, and whose various civil institutions are more effectually calculated to promote the happiness and prosperity of mankind than those of Old England; but that they have been perverted by the abuse in my representation, is a fact too notorious to be denied.

The Author. Your observation is very just. The constituent parts of our Constitution, and the spirit of our laws, have received the encomiums of the greatest statesmen and writers of most nations. His wanton abuse of those institutions and laws has foiled him with his own weapons, by attacking principles which are good, and not confining himself to the practice which has been bad.

John Bull. Yet he has the presumption to say, Mr. Burke would refute him if he could.

The Author. I should entertain a mean opinion of Mr. Burke, if he descended to refute principles which in this country confute themselves. What

man of fortune but would risk his life, rather than be robbed of half his annual income by a metaphysical mob. Such an equalizing of property is not in the nature of things. There will always be a Lazarus as well as a Dives. His levelling principles may prosper a century hence in Botany Bay, as they were the best calculated for America. The Americans had no Princes to cut up, no Nobility to trim, nor any Bishops to feast on; they were all in a state of equality. Under such circumstances, a republic seems to promise to every man the highest enjoyment of liberty. But experience proves, that men deviate from first principles. The mind of man is restless and aspiring. The aggrandizement of wealth breaks the bond of equality, and creates power; power creates influence, and influence generates corruption. Hence all the republics in the civilized world, Holland, Venice, Berne, &c. &c. being founded on a levelling system, have degenerated into slavish aristocracies, which are compleat and positive refutations of his republican principles. Different gradations of rank, from the peasant to the Prince, and subordination among mankind, are founded in Nature, confirmed by Scripture history; and no new-fangled representative levelling system can alter that which forms a part of the Constitution of the world. It may derange, like a storm, the order of things for a time, but principles will ever return to the channel Nature has decreed them to course in.

in. America is in her infancy, and the boasted perfection * of her polity already at variance with its principle; and France, to the infinite mortification of this flaming Republican, has widely differed from his pure representative system, by establishing an hereditary Monarchy. She found without that key-stone to bind the whole, her Government would be enfeebled, and her Constitution, doubtful as it may be, would be rendered more precarious. His comparative statements of the expences of Government in England and America, is of all his attempts the most futile. If the income allowed to the Supreme Chief in America amounts to no more than the income of the Mayor of one of our cities, is it not idle to suppose his Majesty should be reduced to near the same establishment? It is the honest pride of the citizens of London to support their municipal establishment in its present dignity; and it is the noble emulation of Britons, and their peculiar boast, that the energy of their Executive Power can command other nations to compliment the flag of the Crown of England. Its dignity is theirs; its splendour animates them, because it is their own. And shall they suffer an Anglo-American adventurer to depreciate their own glory?

* See proposals of Reform in her Representation, Second Part of Rights of Man.

John Bull. There will be no end to his vanity while he can write ; but his reputation must cease with every true Englishman who can read.

The Author. Clearly so, by the following citations from his book, which being written by a man who, taking him at his own words, has arrived to an eminence in political literature, the man of sense will blush at his vague conjectures, and the politician despise his strained definitions of Government. I shall select a few from the many which occur in his last work *, and arrange them under the following heads :

METAPHYSICAL ABSURDITIES.

“ Were even ourselves to come again into existence, instead of being succeeded by posterity, we have not *now* the right of taking from ourselves, the right which would *then* be ours.

“ The wretched state to which man is reduced by wars, under established Governments, is certainly not the condition Heaven intended for man.

“ Could it be made a decree in Nature, and man could know it, &c. &c.

* Second Part Rights of Man.

“ The ridiculous insignificance into which literature and the sciences would sink could they be made hereditary.

“ The mysterious word Government robs industry of its honours by *pedanticly* making itself the cause of its effects, and purloins from the general character of man the merits that appertain to him as a social being.

“ The present generation will appear to the future as the Adam of a new world.”

POLITICAL ABSURDITIES.

“ The inhabitants of every country under the civilization of laws easily civilize together. But Governments being yet in an uncivilized state, and almost continually at war, they pervert the abundance which civilized life produces, to carry on the uncivilized part to a greater extent.

“ The keeping the wild beasts in the Tower can be no other than to shew the origin of Government ; they are in place of a Constitution. O, John Bull, what honours thou hast lost by not being a wild beast !

“ Government

“ Government has two distinct characters. One
 “ civil, dispensing laws at home; the other of the
 “ court, operating abroad on the rude plan of un-
 “ civilized life; the one attended with little charge,
 “ the other with boundless extravagance; and so
 “ distinct are the two, that if one was to sink as it
 “ were by a sudden opening of the earth, and to-
 “ tally disappear, the former would not be de-
 “ ranged.

“ When the ability in any nation to buy is de-
 “ stroyed, it equally involves the seller.

“ Could the Government of England destroy
 “ the commerce of all other nations, she would
 “ most effectually ruin her own.

“ The more perfect civilization is, the less oc-
 “ casion it has for Government, because the more
 “ does it regulate its own affairs, and govern itself.

“ Civil Government does not consist in execu-
 “ tions.

“ Were a Government so constructed, that it
 “ could not go on unless a goose or a gander were
 “ present in the Senate, the difficulties would be
 “ just as great and as real on the flight or sickness
 “ of the goose or the gander, as if it were called a
 “ King.”

John Bull. If his reputation depends on his wit, his lame attempts will deprive him of the last remaining remnant.

The Author. His attempts, in general, sacrifice his principles. For instance, “levelling all distinctions, equalizing property, one form of Government in Europe*, and universal peace,” can never be accomplished, Governments being subject to all the various affections of men. Till he can eradicate self-love, the parent of self-interest from the heart, his theories will prove fallacious. If we believe him, we might imagine, that by regeneration* he can produce a new creation, divested of all positive vices; and this new species of mortals are to kiss and be friends in every quarter of the globe. Adam’s transgression is atoned for in the American Elysium, and all the world is becoming an uniform paradise. Happy they who live to see that golden age. Pale Poverty no more shall distress the eye of Humanity. Imperious Princes no more to wars of plunder shall command the affectionate husband, breathing an heroic sigh over the dewy cheeks of a fond wife; no aged parent, with silver hairs, shall be brought to silent sorrow for the loss of a dutiful son, his prop and pillow,

* See his anticipation of all Europe becoming one Republic, Second Part Rights of Man.

† Remark the frequent use of this word in Rights of Man.

snatched by vultures to the altar of a mad ambitious war. No more shall polluted streams of vice offend the blushing moon; all Nature shall revel in one long Summer's day; Heaven shall shower down manna to all; wailing and gnashing of teeth shall no more prevail; but an universal love shall reign, and every one shall have an equal share of manna*.

John Bull. As he is in possession of the philosopher's stone, and in his dedication to Fayette he promises to join him on the borders of Germany, I shall recommend him to lose no time in imparting his secret to the French.

The Author. Your recommendation receives my hearty concurrence. My best wishes attend the rights of man in every despotic State. Next we proceed to notice the Aristocratic party, at the head of whom I find a brilliant champion. In contemplating the genius and talents of this great political character, admiration, surprize, and regret, play on the flattered senses, which are alternately animated with retrospect and damped by dereliction. Who so eminently distinguished himself the patriot hero? Who so industriously probed every

* See his chimerical speculations in Second Part of Rights of Man, for equalizing property, and his philanthropic plan of granting annuities to the poor.

canker which assailed the Constitution? Who so indefatigable for public Reform? Even from the Eastern Empire down to the Royal kitchen experienced the effects of his improving genius. Who so gloriously laboured to reduce the overgrown influence of the Crown? Who declaimed with more applause and patriotism during the American war? The very Minister himself trembled at his oratory, more than Felix did when reproved by Paul.

John Bull. Alas! the age of patriot chivalry is no more! The Genius of Liberty is transplanted to a more propitious soil, and the Norman seeds are vegetating. It is possible, and I should rather conclude his patriotism became a sacrifice to the Higher Powers. The smiles of a Court are very tempting in the decline of a Parliamentary career.

The Author. We have so many instances of defection in the *finale* of great political characters, as amount to a clear proof that the Constitution has long since been invaded by undue influence, which prevents men of the greatest patriotic virtues from meeting the reward due to their public services, without subjecting their inward sincerity to the mask of a corrupt system. I shall briefly notice the chief Aristocratic dogmas, or Tory principles, which eclipse the brilliant thoughts, the glowing imagination, and deep erudition of this great politician, and that gave the alarm, and excited a
spirit

spirit of political investigation, which tends to dishonour and depreciate those hereditary rights and claims, which he takes an unqualified occasion to assert. He has created a jealousy among those whom it would perhaps have been a merit in him rather to have applauded than to have censured; and notwithstanding his inimical views, he has fanned the flame for religious toleration, and essentially inspired the cause of liberty.

John Bull. It is an ill wind which blows no one good. The prescriptions of power oft betray the want of wisdom. He should have known John Bull never gulps a pill but by his own choice.

The Author. It is strange a man who has been your advocate so many years should forget your disposition. It is impossible your native independent spirit could assent to his arbitrary principles, which in his bitter invectives against the Dissenters he has laid down. He is an instance of that frailty of human nature which all men deplore, when they perceive a great man displaying his abilities at the expence of his wisdom and philosophy. Religious discords in a free State have the peculiar faculty, above all other evils, to render the arm of Government despotic. The attack on Dr. Price is for that reason the more inexcusable from a man of learning and a philosopher. A few strictures on the particular passage in that celebrated divine's sermon I shall

shall submit to your consideration. He observes *,
 “ That on the three following principles, and
 “ more especially on the last, was the Revolution
 “ founded.

“ The right to liberty of conscience in religious
 “ matters.

“ Secondly, The right to resist power when
 “ abused. And,

“ Thirdly, The right to chuse our own Gover-
 “ nors, to cashier them for misconduct, and to
 “ frame a Government for ourselves.

“ Were it not true that liberty of conscience is
 “ a sacred right, that power abused justifies re-
 “ sistance, and that civil authority is a delegation
 “ from the people. Were not, I say, all this
 “ true, the Revolution would have been not an
 “ assertion, but an invasion of rights; not a Re-
 “ volution, but a rebellion.”

It cannot be inferred from the above premises,
 that Dr. Price considers the Crown elective. His
 inferences undoubtedly are, that there exists a right
 unalienable in the body of the people to maintain
 their liberties. But on this important period I

* P. 34.

shall reserve a more full discussion for your political history, and briefly observe, that as the Constitution was recovered at the Restoration, the people acquired no new rights at the Revolution, which Mr. Burke affirms Dr. Price assumes. When the contract between the King and people is broken on the part of the King, the people may withdraw their allegiance, and a Parliament may peaceably supply the defect, but it has no right to frame a new form of Government. It is the interest of every individual in the nation to have the Constitution considered inviolable.

The principles of Dr. Price are laid down on the true basis of liberty; but as they have called forth so much virulence, let me enquire of what serious import are these dogmas to you, whether asserted by an Archbishop of Canterbury, a Pope of Rome, a Doctor Sacheverel, or a Doctor Price? What ground is there to excite your prejudice, if they be consonant to the spirit of your free Constitution?

John Bull. That they are the immortal principles of freedom admits of no doubt. And as the sons of Freedom, with life and fortune we will maintain them, and with a noble pride deeming ourselves an enlightened people, we will support the established Church in its utmost purity; but we disclaim all invidious rancour with sectaries; we esteem ourselves

selves as brethren in reference to the main principles of the Gospel. The slavish dogmas of the Roman church, and every superstitious formality, vanish as Reason recovers her sovereign sway; and all the ridiculous embargoes, and unnecessary imposts on the road to Heaven, are clearly discovered to be the invention of priests, who, as a worthy secretary observed, “appeared to him like so many
 “pilots, who tell of a thousand sand-banks, obstructing the road into port, in order to be paid
 “the pilotage. Scarce any thing to me is so safe,
 “so easy, and so pleasant, as the way which conducts to Heaven—Love God, love your neighbours, and be just. This is our law and our
 “prophets.”

The Author. But it must be confessed the intemperate zeal of many divines has carried them so far, as to mix politics with divinity in the pulpit, and its fatal effects have been experienced in every age. The express duty of the Clergy is to promote the happiness of mankind. True happiness can only be derived from a rigid adherence to the religious and moral duties of life, and it is their particular unwearied duty to enforce them. On political topics it may be a question, whether it be consistent to write as citizens, at least let them preach as divines. Our Saviour never made one parable on politics; this should be a powerful example with the ministry. The union of Hierarchy and Court

intrigue has been a bane to mankind. It is pampered pride and domineering ambition, feasted by the labour and toil of poverty and ignorance. Had our Great Politician been content to explode this heterogeneous mixture, we should have applauded the wielding of his glittering falchion; but we must wholly condemn the consequences, when we find it sheathed in the vitals of our very freedom.

John Bull. To preach infallibility in Church or State, is a gross reflection on the good sense of the age. That breaches in the Constitution will be made, and abuses insinuate themselves, are as certain as the fallibility of man.

The Author. Most assuredly; notwithstanding the chief statutes are founded on equity and reason, and the practical use of them for ages has rendered them venerable, as was remarked by the Commons at the conference with the Lords of Charles the First's reign, in the noble struggle between Patriotism and Despotism, "That the laws of Eng-
 " land were grounded on reason more ancient than
 " books, consisting much in unwritten customs,
 " and so full of justice and true equity, that their
 " most honourable predecessors and ancestors
 " many times propugned them with a *nolumus mu-*
 " *tari*; and so ancient, that from the Saxon times
 " they had continued for the most part the same, as
 " appeared

“ appeared in the old remaining manuscripts of
 “ the laws of Ethelbert, King of Kent, and of
 “ Alfred, after the union of the Heptarchy.”

John Bull. But have not the civil laws been twisted, shaped, and turned, like the Sybilline leaves, according as chance has formed the pericraniums of the grand interpreters, who have refined upon refinement with the fluctuations of interest, that in many instances the pandect has been tortured into another sense. Is not the police as defective as that of any State in Europe, wherein magistrates make a trade of justice, and a swarm of pettifoggers pick a man's pocket in open Court. And, in like manner, the political statutes, have they not been perverted by the flagitious collusions in office, and abuse of public money? Has not the liberty of the subject been abused by extra-judicial constructions on libels, and abridging the rights of juries? And has not the political part of the Constitution been rendered null and void by the violation of the freedom of election.

The Author. Your sarcasms set Envy at defiance. Malice, indeed, may direct her shafts at the shield of Truth, but in vain; they will recoil, to her own destruction.

John Bull. These facts being admitted, will any reasonable and independent man affirm this is an

improper period to reform the representation? When will the Messiah come? Will he not rather say, let us embrace a peaceful opportunity to repeal the obnoxious and oppressive refinements of the law. Let us correct abuses in time, and render efficient the statute laws of the land, which are founded on true equity and reason. Is not this the end of Government, the relative duty of Governors to the governed.

The Author. Beyond a doubt, it is the *sine qua non* of liberty. But your enemies will say your zeal for reform discovers a general principle, which proving too much, renders a perverse practice the common effect. Better mitigate error than sacrifice precedents.

John Bull. The law of precedents is useful, so far as to ascertain the two fundamental principles, right and wrong. Sovereign regal power converts a bad precedent into a worse practice, by appealing to precedents established in an illiterate age. Sovereign reason, the illuminating deity of Man for this century past, verging into light and perception, rejects the ignorance of military ages, and, shocked with the bloody shield of revenge, seeks the enlightened rays of the sciences and the arts; and the wisdom of the present age laughs to scorn those interested few, who pretend to be panic struck with the idea of reforming abuses.

The Author. No precedent can be maintained against the conviction of reason and truth. In the history of this country, I find through every century, Prerogative, Aristocracy, and Priesthood, have been alternately vigilant depredators on the rights of the great majority of people; and at different periods it became absolutely necessary for the Democratic part to oppose equality of right to the inequality of men, to remedy the abuses of the Constitution; and it is evident that the defect and abuse of the representation of the people has been the sole cause of all the grievances and innovations which have occurred since the Revolution. What opinion then can you entertain of a man who lays down the following unconstitutional and dangerous dogmas.

* 1st. That the King holds his Crown wholly independent, and in contempt of the nation.

2d. That the people of England have in no case whatever any more right to alter or interrupt the hereditary succession once established, than they have wholly to abolish the monarchy.

† 3d. That the Aristocratic and Democratic parts of the Constitution originate with, and derive all their legal power from the King.

* Reflections.

† Appeal, p. 46.

Hence Kings do not derive their right to the Crown from the people, and are not responsible to them, which is a most arbitrary dogma, denying in its consequences the very principles of our free Constitution, which has so wisely provided against the succession of a tyrant, by placing the supreme power in the Legislature, and rendering a King subordinate to the law. We do not at first view see the remote consequences to which this libel on the Constitution applies. It is a renunciation of the rights and powers of the people to legislate for themselves; and sets the will of the King above the law. In fact, these principles being equally as unconstitutional as the Republicans, and prior in publication, whatever faction or anarchy have or may arise in consequence, this great politician * “ is deeply responsible, and an enemy to the free “ Constitution of this kingdom.”

When principles such as the foregoing proceed from a man who has left the vessel of patriotism, and clung to the throne, who has forsaken the true principles of constitutional liberty, men will regard with a jealous eye the progressive steps of arbitrary power by the growing increase of secret and corrupt influence †.

* Sir Brooke Boothby's Observations, p. 73.

† What I confess was uppermost with me, what I bent the whole force of my mind to, was the reduction of that corrupt influence which is itself the perennial spring of all prodigality and
of

John Bull. I wish some learned Aristocrat would teach me the dead languages, that I may be convinced I have a living Constitution, for this secret and corrupt influence is Latin and Greek to me. In fact, the dead languages conceal many mysteries; for the other day, reflecting that too many of the pigs found their way to the Rectors, when poor Dactyle, the Curate, looked as if he had not tasted a slice since he put on the *toga*; I took the liberty to remonstrate with the jolly ecclesiastic, who dogmatically asserted his claim in Greek; and when I enquired of Dactyle into the matter of right, the pedagogue, anticipating the parsonage, supported his Reverend Master's argument in Latin. Thank God, I replied, I am not the first man who has been talked out of his reason by Latin and Greek; neither are we the first nation. Oh, the glorious liberty of the press, I have nothing but that bulwark left to shame men into virtue, to extract from their vices, and maintain my interest in the State.

The Author. John Bull, forbear your illustrations. Let your zeal be weighed in the scale of your understanding, and then your friends will not charge

of all disorder, which loads us more than millions of debt, which takes away vigour from our arms, wisdom from our Councils, and every shadow of authority and credit from the most venerable parts of our Constitution.

Mr. Burke's Speech, Feb. 11, 1780.

you

you with a heated imagination. But as your hints apply to the necessity of a Reform in the mode of supporting the Established Church, I cannot without deep concern remark its expedience, from the apparent decay of its discipline and sanctity, which is occasioned by continuing the laws of an intolerant age, at a period when time has entirely changed the face of things. In the days of superstition, the people, by the sacrifice of a temporal property, overlooked the mercenary views of the church in the prospect of an eternal felicity. But in this enlightened age the Clergy can hope nothing from the sanctity of their order, when the very means of their support are esteemed by their parishioners as not founded in reason or equity. But this, John Bull, is a subject we shall leave to the wisdom of the Legislature.

John Bull. Assuredly; but you must permit me to reply to the imputation of a heated imagination, and on the leading subject leave you to decide, when I affirm, and will maintain, that the nation of which I compose claims an inherent and unalienable right to preserve the constituent parts of the Constitution independent and entire; and I utterly disclaim any right a Parliament might claim to alter the Constitution, contrary to this the collective sense of the community. The King, Lords, and Commons, are in trust for themselves and myself, John Bull; and whenever they separate

rate the joint interest, by the Constitution I am authorized to remonstrate; it impowers me eventually to interfere. If the Executive Power influences a majority in the Legislature, our Constitution is violated. That the venality of borough traffic, and the effects of the Septennial Act, have repeatedly reduced us to this dilemma, is too palpable. By the stern virtue of my ancestors was the path laid down for posterity to walk in. Let the present age remember, that it ever was the disposition of arbitrary power to deface it; let us therefore, with the same native spirit of our ancestors, unanimously resolve to reclaim an equal and free delegation of our elective power, that we may stand upon sure ground.

The Author. With infinite pleasure, John Bull, I congratulate you on discovering true English spirit. I must confess you have borne away the palm; and I am proud to say, in your dignity I perceive justice; in your firmness, truth; in your judgment, reason; and in your resolution, the trio combined.

John Bull. Reason, truth, and justice are the facts we are at issue on. Let not any man think that with impunity he can violate those laws which God has rendered sacred, and equally to be enjoyed by every individual; which are the foundation of liberty, the rich consolation to the human mind,
 the

the balmy succour to virtuous affliction, and the stern reproof to vicious principles.

The Author. After some private conversation, John Bull left me, first engaging to renew his visits every day till I had fully asserted his rights.

SECTION II.

Remarks on the Rights of Man, Society and Government.

AT this next visit from John Bull, he very politely declined any further dialogue for the present, and left me to pursue these topics agreeable to my own inclination. Before I proceed, I may be permitted to observe, that having differed on political points with writers of both parties, and in the course of my observations may have occasion to differ with others of not so modern a date, I should incur the imputation of presumption, if my difference of opinion went merely with a view to criticise; my chief object is the investigation of true constitutional principles. And, as Voltaire has well observed, men are so variously constituted, that some by nature reason wrong, others are incapable of reasoning, and others again are ever inclined to oppose and censure those who do reason: confessing myself free, therefore, from every consideration of party prejudice or interested motive, I shall deliver my sentiments on political points, as reason presents them to my mind, and, with the greatest deference, I beg to submit them to the candid reader.

In discussing the subjects of this section, I shall endeavour to avoid prolixity, as from an intimate acquaintance with my friend John Bull, I find, though he be possessed of patience to sift the few grains of corn from the chaff, he is better pleased when he is saved the trouble.

The first subject which comes under our notice is the rights of man, which appears to be treated of by some in too general a manner. When men, speaking of government, talk of natural rights, it pre-supposes a state of nature pre-existing before society was formed. But as I do not find any author who has been able to prove a real existence of this primitive state, the rights, powers and properties of this natural state can be only hypothetical. To consider man in this abstracted state, is merely speculative and fallacious; for philosophers assume a maxim, where no cause appears, it is to be considered as not existing. If, therefore, we fail in proving this general state of nature, we lay down wrong principles, by asserting natural rights in a state of society, and treating of them in abstracted terms. Adam, for the very short period he was by himself, was in a state of nature; and the legendary tales of Robinson Crusoe, Philip Quarles, &c. shew also they were in the same state. But they were no longer in that primitive state than when they were by themselves. So soon as companions were added to them they entered into a state of society, wherein

wherein their natural liberty was resigned for reciprocal benefits; an exchange of natural rights for social liberties took place, for which God, in a singular manner, had fitted the human mind. Upon further enquiry of these undefined natural rights, Mr. Locke observes*, “where there is no law there is no freedom;” and where no law is there can be no transgression. Right is therefore reduced to a mere legal term; for admitting these maxims, it is evident laws only can establish rights; and laws can only arise from society, being rules of conduct emanating from the reason and conscience of men, under a sense of their weakness, their wants, and their fears. And as the Holy Scripture informs us, all men are equal in the sight of God, Blackstone, Locke, Montesquieu, and other eminent authorities, have truly affirmed all men are equal in social rights; I say social rights in contradiction to natural rights; for, upon examination, we find when they descend to particulars all their varied definitions of polity bottom on one fundamental principle, social liberty, a renunciation of metaphysical natural rights for reciprocal duties and benefits; *man, in a social state, being entitled to the full enjoyment of every acknowledged benefit of life, he is only restrained from doing wrongs and committing injuries.* Hence I conclude there is no such primitive state as that of nature, but to solitary sepa-

* On Gov. p. 2—57.

rated individuals, no such unlimited power as natural right in a society of men; and I am of opinion the anarchy and riots which have arisen among the lower orders of people, have been occasioned by their not having formed certain fixed ideas of social duties and restraints; they have mingled natural and social rights together, have overlooked the reciprocal duties of social life, and by intemperate notions of natural liberty have confounded the relative obligation to submission with the undefined power of resistance, which has occasioned the most violent disorders in the community. To admit a state of nature wherein man has natural independent rights, and clash them with social restraints, is mere sophistry. Under the impression of these indiscriminate rights, a man who plunders or sets fire to another's house, is reduced to a level with the brute creation. This ideal state of nature and natural rights lessens the dignity of the human race, which God has eminently exalted above the whole creation, endowed man with reason, and "put him under strong obligation of necessity, convenience, and inclination, to drive him into society, as well as fitted him with understanding and language to continue and enjoy it*." These riots and factions in society are the effects of ignorance, and frequently

* Locke on Gov. p. 2—77.

are the immediate causes of necessary laws which border on tyranny. The best assurance for the highest enjoyment of social liberty is a general diffusion of knowledge among the lower orders of people. When the reason of man is directed to true principles, it conquers more than the sword, and is the true source of liberty, peace, and virtue. It is only by the ignorance of the greatest number in a State that it wears the chains of slavery an hour. Enlightened reason gives an energy to the human mind which despots tremble at; and, like fallen angels, sink before truth, in guilty pusillanimity and despair.

The next and second subject of remark is Society, for which state man is peculiarly fitted by his maker; and for the free enjoyment of liberty in this state, men have no other rules to resort to than the laws of Nature and revelation, which are the laws of God. These laws I shall briefly notice, in order to ascertain the social duties and rights of man. It is certain that man, by Nature subject to the eternal and immutable laws of good and evil, wanted not promulgated precepts to direct him in the pursuit of his own true and substantial happiness, “* which is the basis of the natural law.” For God endowing man with reason, had enabled him by the aid of his conscience to discover the

* Blackstone's Com. vol. i. p. 41.

commixed principles of good and evil, and to discriminate rules of action by which his rights, his interests, and his happiness might be assured him. These first principles of conduct, which secured those benefits, and which are reciprocal in society, were to honour God, to live honestly, to injure nobody, to render to every one his due, and in all things to do unto others as he would be done by. These general precepts constitute the law of Nature.

But the reason of man being corrupt, and his understanding full of ignorance, the exercise of right reason was perverted by self-love, that uncultivated, yet indispensable spur, grafted on the mind to quicken it to action, and engage it in the pursuits of its own happiness. This occasioned the benign interposition of the Divine Author of Nature, in compassion for the frailties of human reason, to discover and enforce its laws, by an immediate and direct revelation. The doctrines thus delivered are called the Divine Law, and they are only to be found in the Holy Scriptures. These precepts when revealed were, on comparison, not only found to be a part of the original principles of the natural law, but tending eminently to illuminate the mind, and conduce to man's felicity.

From these Laws of Nature, and the Divine Law, spring all human laws. To these general precepts
Justinian

Justinian has reduced the whole doctrine of law * ; and it follows that the constitutional law of every State should be founded on these eternal laws of true equity and reason. No human laws are binding or valid if contrary to them. To establish these laws, and secure their observance in society, certain restraints and limitations must be imposed. Nevertheless Mr. Blackstone observes, the rights of man, independent of society, leave him under the Divine as well as natural law, to pursue his own liberty agreeable to the dictates of his reason, independent of any human laws. But so brutish a state is incompatible with human nature, man being incapable of living alone ; neither has he resolution to live reclusé from society. In fine, man, as before remarked, was peculiarly formed for society, in which, for the preservation of peace the benefits of mutual security, and the quiet possession of property, natural liberty and natural right become subservient to civil limitations and to moral and religious restraints, which is a submission of the private wills of every member of society to the will of one man, or of one or more assemblies of men, chosen by the common consent of the community, and to whom the supreme authority is intrusted. And this will of that one man, or assemblage of men, constitutes the *Law*, for which every individual pays the price of his natural

* Inst. i. p. 3.

liberty, by yielding a submission in return for the benefits of having his life, liberty, and property protected. This exchange of submission for protection arising from a sense of weakness and necessity, is understood to mean the original compact of society.

Natural liberty would be truly an evil, unrestrained by social ties ; and the allurements to social liberty are so great, that a State having secured by laws the free possession of the one, enjoy in the highest degree the privileges of the other.

Society being necessary for the existence of the human race, it followed, from the various separated divisions of the earth, and other natural causes, that mankind must necessarily be divided into many societies, and form separate States and nations, independent of each other, yet from that universal prevailing disposition to traffic, a mutual and continued intercourse must arise. Hence the regulation of this intercourse constitutes * the law of nations. But as these different States are independent of each other, and are wholly governed by their own laws, none can assume the power of dictating to the other where there is no acknowledged superiority. The regulation of this intercourse therefore depends on mutual treaties and compacts,

* Blackstone, vol. i. p. 13.

constructed on those principles of equity and reason, which constitute the Law of Nature.

The association of mankind into different societies being for the enjoyment of mutual liberty and security, these benefits can only extend to every individual by laws framed on the principles of general liberty and equal justice, the Laws of Nature and of God. On these first principles the civil and religious liberties of mankind are assured them; but that men have mistaken the true principles of Government, or these first principles have been perverted by ambitious men, and mankind, instead of being happy and free, have fallen into slavery, is too evident from the number of despotic nations in the world. This circumstance leads to the third subject of remark, which is Government.

If the Mosaic account be just, it followed that the first families, so long as the distinct ties of relationship could be ascertained, must have been governed by patriarchal authority; but when those ties were obliterated by the increase of mankind, the necessity of establishing a public interest no doubt convened them together, the oppression of the powerful over the weak must necessarily have suggested the idea of creating a Supreme Power, which should counterpoise the natural inequality of men, by dispensing equal justice and equal security to all; and this idea could only arise from a posi-

tive conviction, that every individual was equally entitled to the benefits of life; and as man from simple rules ascend to the more complex, the supreme power vested in one or more for the common interest of the whole community must have been created by choice, it could not have been established but by election, when the enviable distinctions of wealth and luxurious refinements were unknown. Every man having equal right, the Legislature no doubt was composed of a few leading men, distinguished and chosen for their abilities and wisdom, and the executive power deputed during pleasure to a chieftain eminent for his qualities, to conduct their enterprizes, to lead them in war, or to preside in their assemblies in time of peace, forming thus a simple Republic, in which their rules of conduct were rather certain usages and customs than written laws. Absolute monarchy could not have been the first form of Government, the associations of mankind being for the sole purpose of protecting the weak from the powerful, it is impossible to suppose they would rest under the authority of a known oppressor.

A disquisition into the dark maze of antiquity to establish this *postulate* were to little purpose, the earliest accounts in the history of modern Europe prove that the first known Governments were republics or principalities, possessing a considerable portion of Democracy.

The

The ancient Britons, the Germans, the Gauls, and other nations, we find were in this primitive state divided into a number of tribes, or small States, under their respective Chieftains, Heretogans, Generals, or Princes, who owed their eminence entirely to their military talents, and whose powers were so far limited as to consist rather in the power of advising than commanding, for every individual was at liberty to chuse whether he would engage in any warlike enterprize or not. The earliest accounts therefore prove, that the chief nations in modern Europe enjoyed political liberty in the most unlimited sense. Of this first native principle of Society, I shall have further occasion to treat, in remarks on the English history. It may be sufficient here to observe, that the chief nations in Europe, from the earliest accounts, possessed this first principle, Political Liberty. To affirm it was uncultivated, rude, and barbarous, is an objection of no weight. It is the birth-right of mankind; and though it has assumed different forms and figures through different ages, in the various modes of Government which have sprung from it, some of which have totally annulled it, yet such instances afford no rational argument against its full and compleat restitution by any community at any future age, where it has been so surrendered or lost.

Upon enquiry into the leading causes of nations surrendering their liberties to the arbitrary will of

one individual, we find in republics the popular assemblies in general have the public good in view; their intentions are to do that which is right and just, but in the execution of their powers they are weak, and too often divided by the ambition of enterprising men; and through the inordinate thirst for power, the common interest has been repeatedly sacrificed, as different parties have prevailed, which is fully exemplified in Machiavel's history of the Republic of Florence. And though Republics have particularly distinguished themselves from Aristocracies and Monarchies in public virtue, public spirit, and patriotism, yet the divisions and dissensions which they have nursed and matured, have ever rendered their executive powers feeble and precarious; and in consequence they have finally sunk into slavish Aristocracies or Monarchies, which justifies Mr. Hume's remark *, That all anarchy is the immediate cause of tyranny. But from the history of modern Europe we approach nearer the truth, when we affirm, that ignorance and superstition have been the cause of the slavery of the European nations, by means of that grand engine of Despotism, Papal Authority. But at this enlightened period, anticipation may indulge a pleasing gratification, when it is considered that the Church of Rome was the most powerful combination ever formed against the autho-

* Appendix, No. 1, p. 208.

erty and security of civil Government, the pillar and support of Despotism, and sworn foe to the liberty of mankind. It was a stupendous fabric of superstition, maintained by the private interests of such a numerous and powerful class of people, that seemed to set at defiance human reason, wisdom, and virtue. But time producing all those changes which result from the active spirit of nature, loosened those ties by fortuitous events, which to the efforts of the human mind, appeared impregnable, and has progressively trenched its immense power, which in another century may be wholly annihilated; and wherever its power has been annulled, Freedom and Toleration have been established, have spread and flourished, as in England after the Reformation, and the entire emancipation from the Papal yoke. Again, in France its power was first weakened by the Pragmatic Sanction, further reduced by the Concordat in the sixteenth century; and now by the Revolution its power is wholly destroyed! And however we may differ on political points, the immortal rays of liberty have emanated with unexampled splendour. The heavenly influence of this spirit raises the human race to a parallel with the higher order of beings. The mind, when unshackled from the superstition of priestcraft and despotism, opens to the wide expanse of dignified nature, and imagination traverses the globe, and explores

explores with boundless research the arcanum of the universe. The Genius of Liberty, wherever she presides, is the parent of the sciences, the arts, and literature; her principles are the purest in nature, being founded on charity, that first law of Scripture, which includes all the virtues of mutual benefits, and gives to man all the enjoyments which flow from the fountain of all perfection. To secure these inestimable blessings, a form of Government has been constituted by the French, which Time will meliorate into a permanent system of social freedom; and being now agitated like a troubled sea, is occasioned by its being founded on an excess of liberty, a consequence naturally proportionate to the degree of oppression thrown off. It followed, when new and brilliant prospects rushed on the public mind, and every man's breast glowing with the dignity of his nature, and every tongue freely expatiating on the glorious cause, that the wisdom of a great and free people should be dazzled by the light of so pure a flame, and in the ardour of one common cause they should sacrifice much at the shrine of Liberty, rendering feeble those constituted powers which were to compact and consolidate into a permanent system—A FREE CONSTITUTION, THE BEST AND GLORIOUS GIFT OF HEAVEN.

In the Emperor's dominions the same enlightened work is begun. In the year 1781 the reduction

tion of monasteries, and the reform of the ecclesiastics in general threw the Conclave at Rome into such a panic, that the aged Pope himself took the unprecedented and dangerous journey to Vienna, in the midst of Winter, to remonstrate in person with Joseph II. but it proved fruitless; the work was begun by a power superior to Sovereign Pontiffs; and the period is not far distant when we may conjecture those extensive dominions will be as free as England and France.

Nations cannot materially err in reforming their modes of Government at a period when the light of reason, by a general diffusion of knowledge, is conspicuously illuminating the civilized world, in a manner as auspicious to the common social rights of man, as evidently conducive to an universal toleration, agreeable to the pure precepts of the Gospel, but which Papal authority has with all its industry so powerfully opposed, by keeping under St. Peter's keys those holy truths, those sacred emanations from the Deity, to enlighten mankind, and to spread the blessed flame of liberty, that man from ignorance might aspire to a true knowledge of himself, and by that knowledge explode the mysteries of priestcraft, and shake off the fetters of slavery. The freedom of nations and toleration are inseparable; the first expands the mind, and the other enlarges the soul. Despotism and priestcraft, the two evil genii which
 ravage

ravage the world with war and persecution, act in mutual contact ; the first shackles the person with coercive restraints, and the other keeps the soul in constant terror. The conjunction of these two despotic powers in Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Germany, as well as the despotism of Prussia, Russia, Sweden, &c. is supported by an usurped authority over the sacred birth-rights of mankind, rejecting the sacred principles of Liberty, the Laws of Nature and of God ; they always go armed against their subjects, like highwaymen against the public ; such is the force of conviction on the human mind, when acting on wrong principles.

Several writers of the present day dishonour the name of Englishmen, and disgrace the British press, by fixing a reproach on the advocates of Liberty, whom they style illuminating philosophers. But when we reflect on the rapid progress of literature during the last two centuries *, is it surprising a general diffusion of knowledge should discover itself in opinions the most liberal, in sentiments the most humane ; and consequently prejudices, superstition, and bigotted principles, yield to the mild and temperate dictates of maturing

* Henry VIII. made a law that all men might read the Scripture, except servants ; but no women, except ladies and gentlewomen who had leisure, and might ask somebody the meaning. The law was repealed in Edward VIth's days.

Selden's Table Talk, p. 7.

reason ?

reason? Had there been a full enjoyment of the liberty of the press during the reigns of the House of Tudor, and the subsequent years, down to the period of the unhappy civil wars, in all probability they would not have taken place. The Star Chamber shackled the mind, tortured reason, and men were left in a state of political and religious darkness. But the passions of the multitude were so inflamed with their native ideas of liberty, that the very measures adopted to keep them in restraint and slavery, added fuel to the smothering pile, which possibly might have been prevented breaking into a flame by the freedom of the press, which carries with it the important privilege of reducing magistrates to the limits of the law; and though it leaves to the higher powers no choice between their duty and their reputation, yet it teaches the subject no other doctrine, it leaves him no other privilege; it is, in fine, the very life itself of every free Government, and the moving principle of whatever is great and glorious in the State. It preserves that harmony in the various institutions and constituted orders of Government which compose the bond of union among the people; and one blessing peculiarly attends this privilege, that Kings and Princes, as well as Ministers and Officers of the State, can never take measures to secure to themselves the fame of posterity, without exalting the interests of the people; and no man, however high his station, is worthy of his place, if a regard
for

for fame and reputation is not the chief motive and active principle of his mind. This renders the liberty of the press a rod of terror to vicious Governors. But to the truly wise patriot, the man who nobly supports his integrity amidst surrounding fascinating temptations, it never ceases to record his fame ; it is a source to gratify the most exalted ambition ; the truly great mind will have no other emulation than to merit its fair impression ; and such men whose rule of conduct is regulated by this noble regard for recorded reputation, merit the full confidence of the nation.

SECTION III.

The Political History of John Bull; or, Remarks on Political Liberty under the Britons.

THE limits which I have prescribed myself, and the leading subject itself under consideration, do neither admit nor require a narrative history; I shall therefore confine myself to occasional remarks on political liberty, from the earliest accounts down to the Revolution, and endeavour to form more certain ideas and determinations on those acknowledged first principles of the Constitution, which we hear of in terms generally loose and undefined. Of these we must remark the following. The Majesty of the People—The Sovereignty of the People—The Supreme Power of the People, &c. I should imagine it to have fallen within the observation of most men, that, from the variety of ideas formed of these first principles, has arisen the spirit of faction and the name of party; and the violence of different parties, which has at times both agitated and alarmed the State, proves in most instances, that particular interests rather than reason have directed their views, and private motives rather than truth have fixed their principles, of which some militate against the texture and genius
of

of our Constitution, and others deny to the people the right of political liberty. Hence political truths, though simple in themselves, have acquired an elaborate mode of discussion; and where it has failed, or even succeeded in elucidating some truths, the mind has been left with faint ideas of first principles, and the common terms Majesty of the People, &c. have become rather bombastic popular sounds than certain defined co-active powers. In discussing these first principles, it is necessary that circumspection should guide the pen of truth; and that they may be freely discussed is the particular privilege of every Briton, a privilege he enjoys from possessing political liberty, which can never be surrendered or lost, but with the destruction of that free Constitution which has sprung from this first native principle.

The Constitution therefore growing out of political liberty, to treat of the one before we have proved the existence of the other is taking the effect before the cause.—A very material distinction occurs to my mind between Social Liberty, Political Liberty, and Civil Liberty. This distinction, if rightly considered, acquires an importance which I find seldom attended to by many political writers, who in general express Political and Civil Liberty in synonymous terms, and involve the general principles of the supreme power of the people with the institutions and laws created by a delegated authority.

rity. With submission I make a distinction of these three descriptions of liberty.

Social Liberty is the positive birth-right of mankind, without distinction of persons. This privilege in a State may be distinguished by two general absolute rights; first, the right of enjoying all those benefits which are supposed to belong to man in the hypothetical state of nature; and which, when he enters into society he is permitted to retain, for the reason that the enjoyment of them does not interfere with the interests or happiness of any of his fellow-creatures. By these absolute rights a man enjoys *loco* motion, or the power of moving his person wherever his inclination leads him, without restraint; he likewise enjoys the privilege of living as he thinks proper, of following his business, his pleasures, and his pursuits, agreeable to his own will, without being dictated to by any other person or power whatever. Hence his vices are not cognizable in Society, unless he publishes them. A man, for instance, may indulge in liquor without restraint; but if when intoxicated he interferes with the interests or the peace of others, and commits injuries, he then becomes subject to those rules or laws by which the society hath agreed to be governed; and that power which every State or Society assumes of establishing such rules and laws, is the second absolute right which every individual is entitled to from Social Liberty.

And this right is that of Political Liberty, which is the first operative principle of society, and which gives to every member of a State the right of convening, either in person or by representative, to establish institutions and rules of conduct by which justice shall protect the virtuous from the vicious, the weak from the powerful, and liberty, peace, and happiness, be enjoyed by the great majority of the community, the happiness of the greatest number being the first object of law in society. The various institutions hence established form a Constitution, and the rules and regulations laid down compose the law or Civil Liberty, from which a material distinction arises between Political and Civil Liberty. Mr. J. Blackstone tells us *, “ Civil Liberty leaves the subject entire master of his own conduct, except in those points wherein the public good requires some directions or restraints.” From the distinction necessary to discriminate between supreme and subordinate power, it appears evident to me, that the ascertaining those points, and giving directions, or creating restraints, is the sole province of political liberty. Such restraints, directions, or points, when expressed and published, compose the civil liberties of the subject, political liberty being the power and science of governing; civil liberty the means used for government; from which I conclude political liberty

* Vol. I. p. 126.

appertains invariably to social liberty, and civil liberty grows out of political liberty. These propositions induce me to make a further remark on a passage in the Commentaries, where I find political and civil liberty used synonymously. It is to the following effect: “* The idea and practice of this political or civil liberty flourish in their highest vigour in these kingdoms, where it falls little short of perfection, and can only be lost or destroyed by its *owner*, the Legislature.” Though with pleasure we admit the premises, it does not follow that the conclusion be just; for political liberty, or the supreme social power, invariably resides in the body of people; and the supreme created power is subordinate to that in fact, but not in terms. The people are the *owners* of the estate; the Legislators are only the trustees, and possess not an arbitrary and discretionary power. But the usurpation of this power by the constituted and delegated authority of this country, stands recorded on the face of history as the cause of all internal commotions and civil wars. That House of Commons which enacted its own existence from three to seven years is an instance the most violent and arbitrary that has been exercised since the being of a Parliament. The admission and sufferance of that usurpation on political liberty, has tarnished the glory of every subsequent reign. On this sub-

* Vol. I. p. 126.

ject I shall have much to advance. It is necessary here to form just ideas on political liberty, before any remarks be made on its first existence in this country, and its subsequent progress. I shall not contract my arguments by narrow notions and prejudices, being convinced, that to liberality of sentiment we owe many blessings; and though it be the pride of human nature to disdain servile imitations, it is to the honour of it to dissipate prejudice, and notice with the cool eye of wisdom the virtues of the most malignant enemy. Far be it from me to excite invidious comparisons. Truth can be only established by elucidation; and without offering the French Constitution by any means as an example to us, I embrace an instance which fully establishes my positions, and confirms the distinction suggested between political and civil liberty. The French have asserted most explicitly the common right of mankind to political liberty, and have made a very evident distinction between that power and civil liberty, by limiting the sitting of any future National Assembly to two years, and denying to such Assembly the powers of continuing in its delegated capacity beyond that period, without a violent usurpation of the constitutional rights of the people, the rights of a nation being absolute, the rights of an Assembly or Parliament relative. Hence political liberty is an absolute power, which the body of people at any future age may assume,

to remedy the abuses of civil liberty, which is a subordinate, created, and relative privilege.

The origin of Constitutions and the various modes of Government being antecedent to all records, we have no lights to guide us through the dark maze of antiquity, by which we can trace their first principles, but the exercise of our reason, aided by those accounts of ancient Government which are known, and which antiquity hath rendered venerable. Many eminent writers, distinguished for their learning, incur the suspicion of narrow minds or biased principles, when they affect to pass over the first æra of the British history, as a maze where perspicuity would be trammelled with defaced pictures, and truth itself be lost in the research. This disregard to antiquity is attended with effects which fully prove an unwarrantable industry to accommodate facts to principles. It may be useful and entertaining to read the laws, institutions, and customs of our ancestors; but when men strain at the precise meaning of an old law, attempt to refute the existence of a particular institution, quibble about the word conquest, depreciate the *poor* Commons, and affirm that the representation of the people arose from the grace and favour of Norman despots. It is with pain, mingled with indignation, we see men of superior abilities and learning disgracing in this

manner the annals of liberty, by drowning her *genius* in the vortex of law.

To engage in the controversy between popular and monarchical writers would be foreign to my purpose ; I shall endeavour, by unquestionable authority to confirm the position, that political liberty invariably resides in the body of people, independent of any refinements of law or religion ; and that from the earliest accounts of antiquity, its co-active powers have been enforced, and may at all times be exercised by the majority of the community, when the injustice and oppression of its delegated powers demand the common interest to be preserved.

The rude history of ancient Britain affords no flattering topic for an historian, no instruction for the reader. The highest gratification which an Englishman can derive are those well authenticated records, which prove, that the Britons enjoyed political liberty. To consult those remote æras with an eye prejudiced by modern political refinement, leads to error and party. The refinement of manners was wholly unknown in those early periods of society, those nice distinctions between the principles Right and Wrong ; and those *wire-drawn* decisions in our modern courts of justice could only be attained by the refinement of many centuries.

ries. The mind therefore ought to be prepared for the distinction between a military age, when the virtues of valour, the love of liberty and independence, were carried to the highest pitch, and that of a commercial age, when wealth creates envious distinctions, and a thirst of gain sacrifices every noble principle of the mind. Men who make this necessary distinction between the two ages, condemn the narrow and dark controversy, whether the Britons were governed by absolute Monarchs or enjoyed Republics, whether their *Kithifrins commune consilium regni*, or Parliaments, were composed of Commoners or Peers, or whether they enjoyed a limited Monarchy. If we can gather from approved authority that they enjoyed the common right of mankind, political liberty, however bold, fierce, or unrefined, the argument will be complete. And when our ancestors at the Revolution, in their Declaration claim, demand, and insist upon all and singular the premises as their undoubted rights and liberties, and 1 Wm. and Mary, s. 2. cap. 2. recognizes all and singular the rights and liberties asserted in the said Declaration to be the true, ancient, and indubitable rights of the people of this kingdom; and the Act of Settlement, which again confirms these liberties, declares them to be the birth-right of the people of England, where shall we fix the æra for these inheritances, if we do not establish them from the remotest antiquity. If the Revolutionists ran over the string of

periods or data, where would they stop, or where shall we now stop? The Petition of Right, the thirty-two corroborating statutes of the two Charters, the Magna Charta itself, and all the Charters granted, or obtained sword in hand from Norman despots, without equivocation declare the premises insisted on to be the ancient rights and liberties of the people of England. What the express verbal liberties of Edward the Confessor were, History does not fully explain *. We find by Mr. Hume some antiquaries as well as himself have narrowed their ideas, and political liberty hath suffered in the research for express laws; but these laws of Edward the Confessor, we learn, were merely confirmations of those established by Alfred; we may therefore presume they were nothing less than those great outlines of political liberty which that wise

* What these laws were of Edward the Confessor which the English, every reign during a century and a half, desire so passionately to have restored, is much disputed by Antiquaries, and our ignorance of them seems to be one of the greatest defects in ancient English History. The collection of laws by Wilkins, which pass under the name of Edward's, are plainly a posterior and an ignorant compilation. Those to be found in Ingulf are genuine, but so imperfect, and contain so few clauses favourable to the subject, that we see no great reason for their contending for them so vehemently. It is probable the English meant the common law as it prevailed during the reign of Edward, which we may conjecture to have been more indulgent to liberty than the Norman institutions. The most material articles of it were afterwards comprehended in Magna Charta. Vol. I. p. 479.

man had digested from Saxon and British originals, and which were involved in the two charters which partially comprize those ancient rights and liberties, so firmly and so effectually insisted on. The laws and institutions of the Great Alfred, Historians inform us were improvements on the customs and usages of the Germans and Britains; and the native Britons, it will appear, possessed such a considerable portion of Democracy, that they may truly be said to enjoy political liberty. And here, to use the expression of another, our enquiries find a resting place, our reason finds a home.

From the preceding remarks it appears, political liberty must be taken in its general sense, meaning the operative power of the people collectively, or by delegation assembled, to maintain the common interest and happiness of the great majority of the nation. But in every age civil liberty, which is its effect, will constantly assume the fashion of the reigning day; and laws which were necessary and beneficial in one age, and to that age appeared to be formed according to strict right and justice, by a future age may be deemed unjust and oppressive; the inference follows, that the particular institutions and laws of remote ages are only useful to the present age, as in the scale of common right justice shall incline the balance, so truly fluctuating are human affairs.

The chief writers among the ancients from whom we learn the best accounts of the ancient Britons are Cæsar and Tacitus; their authority has in general obtained the confidence of all historians. By Cæsar's Commentaries, it appears the Britons were divided into a number of small States, in which Democracy had the ascendant. On his invasion, he expressly tells us *—" Among the Britons the chief command and administration of the war was, by the Common Council, bestowed on Cassivelaun." And that the Commons were called to this Assembly, Sothilius † says the commonalty composed a chief part in their public councils. Other corroborating testimonies I shall deduce, to prove that the Britons enjoyed the common right of mankind, political liberty. Milton, the immortal bard, in his History of Ancient Britain, refers to all the known ancient authors, and from his undoubted veracity two instances may be selected, which are strong evidences of the existence, at that epoch, of this true native spirit of liberty, which is so much the pride and glory of Englishmen. Britain at the period of the Roman Invasion was divided into separate States, independ-

* Lib. V. c. 5.

† Mr. Justice Doddridge on the Antiquity of Parliaments, p. 66. who cites Francis Tate—*Apud hos papulus magna ex parte primatum tenet*—Also Vitus in Hist. Brit. Lib. VIII. p. 11. Bede, Lib. II. c. 2. & 13.

dent of each other; many of which had surrendered, or were subdued by the Romans, who were particularly desirous of introducing their laws and customs; for this purpose, “ Cogidinus *, a British King, their fast friend, had certain cities given him; a haughty craft which the Romans used, to make Kings the servile agents of enslaving others.” The Silures, one of the British States, had for several years held out against the Roman yoke under their Prince Caractacus, but were at length subdued in a pitched battle on the west edge of Shropshire, before the commencement of which this valourous Prince went up and down, animating his officers and leaders †, “ That this was the day, this was the field, either to defend their liberties, or to die free; calling to mind his glorious ancestors, who drove Cæsar, the Dictator, out of Britain.”

This is an instance which the modern refined spirit of liberty cannot surpass, and shews how deeply independence and common right are rooted in the British heart. The second instance corroborates this idea. After the victory of the Romans over Boadicea, “ Suetonius ‡, the Roman General, gave too much way to his anger against

* Milton's Hist. Brit. Book II. p. 68 & 69. Tacitus Vit. Agricola.

† Milton's Hist. Brit. B. II. p. 81. ‡ Tacitus Vit. Agricola.

“ the Britons, Claffician therefore fending fuch
 “ word to Rome, that thefe fevere proceedings
 “ would beget an endless war, Polyclitus, no Ro-
 “ man, but a courtier, was fent by Nero to fee
 “ how things went. He admonifhing Suetonius
 “ to ufe more mildnefs, *awed* the army, and to
 “ the Britons gave matter of laughter, *who fo much*
 “ *even till then were nurfed up in their native liberty,*
 “ as to wonder that fo great a General, with his
 “ whole army, fhould be at the rebuke and or-
 “ dering of a Court fervitor.”

I fhall conclude the investigation of that theorem
 of ancient Britifh right, *Political Liberty*, by citing
 a learned modern writer, who obferves *, “ No-
 “ thing is worfe founded than an opinion induf-
 “ trioufly propagated by many writers, who ne-
 “ glecting reason and hiftory, and guided only by
 “ prejudice, have afferted †, the firft government
 of

* Dr. Stuart’s Antiquity of the Englifh Conftitution. Part I.
p. 52.

† See Brady’s Answer to Petyt, Filmer’s Patriarchia, and
other writings for prerogative. The writers on this fubject feem
to confound the firft ftate of the Britons with that in which
they afterwards appeared, when conquered by the Romans.
Tacitus fays exprefsly, *Ipsi Britanni delectum, ac tributa et in-
juncta imperii numerata impigne obeunt. Si injuriæ defint, hos ægre
tolerant jam domiti ut parcant nondum ut ferviant ægri*, c. 13. And
Dion on Xiphilin, in the Life of Severus, obferves to the fame
purpofe, *Apud Britannos populus magna ex parte primatum tenet.*

“ of the Britons was regal and despotic, an opi-
 “ nion from which they infer the absurdest conse-
 “ quences. When the ambition however, or avarice of Cæsar had brought him to our island,
 “ and succeeding Emperors were fired with the
 “ glory of subjecting it to their arms, the inhabi-
 “ tants lost their liberty and independence.

The several instances here adduced, from many to the same purpose, evidently shew, that the Britons fully enjoyed political liberty. And it is observable from the earliest accounts of various nations, before the pursuits of commerce and the refining of manners took place, equality of right, liberty, and independence, were as well understood and maintained as at the present day. Military valour was the peculiar excellence of an age when liberty discovered herself in great and magnanimous enterprizes, before commerce had influenced the minds of men to a mean hypocrisy, and all the little arts of trade had stifled every noble effort of

The writers just now referred to, by endeavouring to found the Royal Prerogative so high, think to prove, that the liberty we enjoy was derived from the concession of our Monarchs. But allowing that the ancient Britons were subject to the arbitrary will of Kings; that this was also the case with the Anglo-Saxons; that William was a conqueror; and that the power of the people lessened the despotism, and detracted from the dignity of our Kings, can it yet be supposed that their concessions would form a Constitution so wise and consistent in all its parts as that of England?

the soul. Mankind in the gross were ever the same. The happiness enjoyed in those remote periods was no doubt equal to that of the present. The ancient Britons painting such part of their bodies as was exposed, was as elegant, fashionable, and bewitching to them, as the tinsel gaudy trappings of the moderns. The vanity, as Milton observes, is only removed from the skin to the skirt. And their mode of fighting in chariots drawn by horses, argues, in my humble opinion, such a knowledge of mechanism, as in no wise corresponds with the very barbarous and ignorant state some writers represent them. Mr. J. Blackstone tells us *, “ of a strong affinity and resemblance “ between their tenets and discipline and some of “ our modern doctrines of English law.” No inference can be drawn to the prejudice of political liberty from their rude state, or our ignorance of their express laws and Government. When we perceive the great outlines of freedom, the love of liberty and independence pervading all ranks of people, and discovering itself on all important occasions, and which the remnant of the Britons, after the Saxons had established themselves in England, carried with them into Wales, we are bound to yield to history and reason, and pronounce the ancient Britons, the aborigines of this island, FREEMEN, who fully enjoyed political liberty,

* Vol. IV. p. 403.

that peculiar birth-right of Englishmen, which was so gloriously exercised in obtaining *Magna Charta* in reviving the ancient Constitution at the restoration of Charles II. and the further securing it at the Revolution. This privilege of convening to maintain the free operation of the Constitution, and the common interest, is the supreme power of the people; a most sacred, invaluable right, growing out of the common equality of original society; a right which every Englishman being truly sensible of, will unite in the sentiment of Lord Bolingbroke, when he says *, “ I feel a secret pride in
 “ that I was *born a Briton*, when I consider that
 “ the Romans, those masters of the world, main-
 “ tained their liberty little more than seven cen-
 “ turies, and that Britain, which was a free nation
 “ seventeen hundred years ago, is so at this hour.”

* Remarks Hist. England; p. 66,

SECTION IV.

Remarks on Political Liberty under the Saxons and Normans.

IN the preceding Section, I have endeavoured to impress on the mind the force and importance of this general axiom, That the supreme power of the people, operating by political liberty, which is the right and power of the majority of the nation to convene at all times and seasons for the preservation of the common interest, is *the first principle of Government*. With this foundation of all we hold most sacred and valuable in our Constitution, we are well prepared to trace the progress of Liberty through the mazes of Superstition, the usurpations of Despotism, or the crooked paths of Anarchy. With this principle the mind penetrates with the eyes of Argus—The stern sophistry of tyrants, the jesuitical impositions of priests, and the plausible quibbles of lawyers, their rights, their powers, their privileges, and their precedents, as shoals in a shallow rapid current, make a great noise, but when the deep tide of reason and common right overflows, they become silent as the grave.

We

We now enter on those periods of history from which were derived the great outlines of our Constitution. I shall pass over all those events and circumstances which serve rather to amuse the mind than illustrate the subject we are upon, and confine my remarks to a few important points which are applicable and useful.

The Saxons who came over from Germany, after the dereliction of the Romans from Britain, brought with them their laws and form of Government, which has been acknowledged by all impartial writers to have been a true model of freedom; and though we are apt to conclude, in such early periods the purposes of society were little understood or valued, * it is however among nations whom we disgrace with the appellation of barbarous, that the duties of the citizen are most generally known. In fine, the very form of our Constitution, its several institutions and laws, are merely refinements on the laws and customs of the Saxons, among whom political liberty seems to have been so well understood, that every man who held a responsible situation in the State was elected thereto by the body of people. The inferior civil and military officers were chosen within the several counties or districts, but their Princes, Heretogans or Generals, were elected in the public council of the nation †; in which

* Dr. Stuart's Ant. Eng. Const. p. 273. † Ib. p. 243.

every freeman assembled in person, or voted for the representative of his district. In these national assemblies a perfect equality reigned, but those only who were distinguished for their military valour and eloquence were elected to the most important offices of Government. Here they also deliberated about war and peace, and concerted the plan of operation for the year, which gave rise to the annual Parliaments established in the reign of Edward III.

From these Saxon originals our present Constitution received its fairest outlines. The Genius of Liberty dictated the act, and the great Alfred impressed on the island of Britain those institutions which are now become congenial with the soil. Of Alfred we are told *, “ he was a complete model of that perfect character, which, under the denomination of a sage or wise man, the philosophers have been fond of delineating rather as a fiction of their imagination than in hopes of ever seeing it reduced to practice.”

† “ His mighty genius prompted him to undertake a most great and necessary work, which he is said to have executed in as masterly a manner, no less than to new model the Constitution, to rebuild it on a plan that should en-

* Hume, Hist. Eng. vol. I. p. 90. † Black. Com. vol. IV. p. 410.

“dure for ages, and out of its discordant materials
 “to form one uniform and connected whole. This
 “he effected, by reducing the whole kingdom
 “under one regular and gradual subordination
 “of Government, wherein each man was answer-
 “able to his immediate superior for his own con-
 “duct and that of his nearest neighbour’s; for to
 “him we owe that master-piece of judicial polity
 “the subdivision of England into tithings and hun-
 “dreds, if not into counties, all under the influ-
 “ence and administration of one supreme magi-
 “strate, the King; in whom, as in a general re-
 “servoir, all the executive authority of the law
 “was lodged, and from whom justice was dis-
 “persed to every part of the nation by distinct,
 “yet communicating ducts and channels, which
 “wise institutions have been preserved for near a
 “thousand years *unchanged*, from Alfred’s to the
 “present time.”

Of these institutions ordained by Alfred, the
 trial by a jury of twelve men is represented as
 “* an institution admirable in itself, and the best
 “calculated for the preservation of liberty and the
 “administration of justice that ever was devised
 “by the wit of man.”

The first principles of our Constitution, as at
 this period laid down, operated by election, the

only true basis of freedom. Every ten householders chose one from among themselves to preside over them, and represent them in the superior courts; in which magistrates, both civil and military, were elected for their several districts, and who also represented the whole body of people in the General Assembly of the Nation, which General Assembly, Wittena Gemote, or Meeting of Wise Men, constituted the Saxon Parliament, which Alfred * ordained for a perpetual usage should be held at London twice a year, or oftener if need be, to treat of the Government of God's people, how they should keep themselves from sin, should live in quiet, and should receive right. The noble simplicity of these last lines conveys a just idea of this good and wise man.

The executive power of the Saxons being placed in the hands of one man, who was the Sovereign, the Constitution was partly monarchical. But as the King could not make laws without the consent of the principal men of the nation, it was in some degree aristocratical; and as the magistrates of the town and rural tithings, and the counties were summoned to the General Assembly of the kingdom, it possessed also a considerable share of Democracy.

The Constitution Alfred thus established from British and Saxon materials was a true limited Mo-

* Mirror of Justices, Chap. I. f. 3. p. 6.

narchy, which having through a series of subsequent years experienced many and dangerous vicissitudes, the dangers it has met renders it the more venerable, and at this period each feels an equal interest in the preservation of its sacred parts, as well as an indignant contempt of all its enemies, both Republicans who are overtly attacking it, and Aristocrats who are secretly undermining it.

It may be useful here to recur to the distinction between political and civil liberty; for when Mr. J. Blackston as above tells us, that the institutions established under Alfred have been preserved unchanged for near a thousand years; we are apt to conclude, that the nation possessed invariably those liberties; but when we find that William the Conqueror, by the aid of priestcraft, rendered the Government despotic, yet those institutions still remained. The distinction between civil and political liberty is rendered evident, and illustrates the maxim of Montesquieu, That the subject may be free and not the Constitution, which I imagine to imply, that the people may have right done them in certain relative matters, as one individual to another; and in this respect the subject may be partially free, and enjoy civil liberty; but having no voice or vote in public measures, nor share in the motions of Government, which being entirely at the arbitrary will of a King and his Council; the Constitution is not free, and the subject is deprived

prived of political liberty. Similar ideas I should conclude induced Lord Clifford, Prime Minister of Charles II. to say, That if the King would be firm to himself, he might carry the Government to what height he would; for if men were undisturbed of their properties, and were assured of liberty of conscience, and strict justice done them at Westminster, and the army made firm to the King, there were none that would have either will, opportunity, or power to resist. That Charles had much at heart the grand object of reigning despotic, is a fact too well confirmed. But the old British spirit at that period was too prevalent to induce him to hope for success by direct overt attempts. Charles fell on the only expedient to deceive the jealous eye of Britons, impose on their credulity, and render the generous bias of their dispositions the only enemy to their real interests. This Charles completely effected by secret and corrupt influence.

Without the violent example of the Conqueror, it may be remarked, that Monarchs at a more refined period have made use of two methods to render themselves absolute over a free people; one method, as practised by the late King of Sweden, by overawing the Diet, and by the stern abuse of his prerogative subjecting it to his will, which was an open, direct, and arbitrary usurpation of political liberty. The second method, as practised by Charles II. like a man of gallantry, by art and address corruptly influencing

fluencing the representatives of the people, in order to govern by his own will. Both methods, in their effects, tending to one point, arbitrary power, though widely differing in the means adopted. Of the two methods, the first is open, manly, and becoming, a military hero panting with ambition for mistaken glory. The second method is indirect, secret, hypocritical, and treacherous, deluding the people with the fairest intentions, at the same time undermining their dearest interests.

These reflections furnish sufficient evidence of the instability of all Governments; the restless aspiring nature of man ever tends to break the great chain of connexion which links the order of society, and ever subverts the best institutions, when operating in the minds of vicious men in power. Hence we find the free Constitution of the Saxons, at various times, tending to anarchy, and at other periods to an actual Aristocracy, to which it seemed inclining when the Conqueror made his invasion, which event overthrew the Saxon free Government, and established on its ruins for a time a system of civil and religious slavery. The Saxons, until this combination of William and the Pope, had acknowledged the primacy of the See of Rome, but had hitherto maintained an independence in their ecclesiastical administration, and resisted the exorbitant claims which supported the grandeur of the Papacy. These were

sufficient motives to induce the Pope to support William's succession to the throne of England; and it further aided his plan of church government, which was widely diffusing itself at this æra over Europe; for wherever civil or religious independence was established, the heavenly powers of the Pope were thundered forth with accumulated virulence. His Holiness espoused William's cause, and by a crusade openly announced his tyrannic intentions; and as a symbol of his Christian-like motives, and his charity to mankind, made William a present of a consecrated standard, with a golden *Agnus Dei*, and a ring with one of St. Peter's hairs in it; and further to promote his holy purposes, and in order that every man might worship the Duke as the champion of the church, pronounced Harold a perjured usurper, and then issued his divine mandates, that he would excommunicate every one that opposed William; and thus, as Mr. Hume observes*, were all the ambition and violence of that invasion covered over safely with the broad mantle of religion.

That the Crown of England till this period was elective, is evident by the choice made by the Wittena Gemote of Harold, who by that Assembly of the nation was settled on the throne prior to the invasion made by William. Had the succession been indisputably established by hereditary descent,

* Vol. I. p. 186,

Edgar Atheling, the right heir to the Crown, as son of Edmund the Outlaw, and grandson of King Edmund Ironside, would have succeeded to the throne, and been confirmed in it without doubt by the Wittena Gemote.

A few reflections arise from this circumstance on the advantages and disadvantages of the Chief Magistrate being elected by the nation, or succeeding by hereditary descent. We find, in whatever State the Crown, or Chief Magistrate, has been elective, that State has proved the theatre of anarchy; the improving wisdom of ages has taught men the ideal and dangerous power of the multitude's choosing a master; and as the science of Government becomes better understood, a true limited Monarchy approaches nearest to that perfection of civil government which both preserves the social equality of men and the common interest of all. The executive power being placed in the hands of one by hereditary descent, subject to the law enacted by the delegated authority of the people, the acknowledged right and superiority of birth embraces popular opinion, and confidence, prevents invidious distinctions, and renders faction silent. Let any one reflect on the private feelings and conviction of the two characters—a King elect or an usurper, and a King in a limited monarchy by descent, and judge from the harmony or discord of their minds, whether in general their situation be agreeable to that

that order and tranquillity which is the essence of every community. The first, perhaps, owes his eminence to a majority opposed to a powerful candidate at the head of a faction, or may have usurped the throne. In either case their jealousies and apprehensions will be the same; their fears are incessantly suggesting to their minds the idea of assassination or poison, they continually go armed against their subjects, and seldom go or return the same road, or sleep often in the same chamber. Strangers to the blissful harmony of a smiling family, their stern brow can never relax to the enjoyments of private life, and they foster two of the greatest enemies to human happiness, jealousy and suspicion; they are never free from those miserable attendants. On the contrary, see the reverse of all this in a King by hereditary descent in a limited Monarchy, whose rule of conduct is prescribed by the legislative power of the people. If any public grievances, or any oppression on the common interest is made, or any violent abuse of the executive power is exercised, the representatives of the people have full power to redress such abuses of the constitutional rights of the people, by impeaching and punishing the Ministers and evil counsellors of the King; and this inestimable privilege must impress on the minds of all, the sacred importance of the freedom of election. In fine, to all candid inquirers, the independence of a House of Commons must appear the only bulwark of all which the
 people

people hold most dear and valuable. The Ministers of the Crown being responsible for the abuses of the Executive Power, a confidence arises between King and people, which discovers itself by a conduct of generous regard and affectionate conduct on the part of the King, and by a grateful submission and staunch loyalty on the part of the people; a hereditary King in a limited Monarchy thus enjoys all the blessings of private life as a man, and all the dignity and power in public life as a King. These enjoyments a King can only assure to himself by making the interests of the people his greatest happiness. His incessant duty is to promote that order and tranquillity in a State which is the first and chief object of Government.

To these advantages of hereditary succession in a limited Monarchy, I am prepared for the objections which have afforded much sportive ridicule to a Republican, who has wilfully overlooked the great line of connexion which links the mutual dependences of the Constitution, or he has imbibed false notions of its principles. But as political liberty is the subject of investigation, the Constitution we shall notice in a future Section, and shall briefly remark, that a King being a minor or an idiot, the first of which has not occurred for near two hundred and fifty years, are objections of no weight, when it is considered an independent Parliament, as prescribed by the Constitution, is
 ever

ever adequate to all fortuitous events of that nature. If the representatives of the people be faithful, the Constitution can never suffer by such events; limits are prescribed to each constituent part, and a violation of those boundaries is an usurpation on the rights of the people. At the present period, as I shall have occasion to observe, the Constitution cannot be materially violated; without a general sense of the perversion diffusing itself through all ranks, one opinion will be formed, and one general sentiment prevail; the people will exercise their birth-right, political liberty, and will restore that which they founded; the Constitution will acquire additional purity, and the proof of its excellence will consist in the harmony and energy of its powers.

From the Invasion down to the Revolution, I shall endeavour to be as concise as the leading subject will admit. The treacherous concessions which William made after the battle of Hastings were merely to pave his way to the Crown by the seeming consent of the English nation; through the influence of the Clergy he obtained this point, but to the infinite mortification of the English, they soon found themselves proscribed, their estates confiscated, oppressive exactions and arbitrary laws enforced, and their native language supplanted by the imposition of a foreign one. Power and property were thus united in the hands of a few, while the
 multitude

multitude were deprived of their common rights. To restore the balance of power and the balance of property was the after-work of ages. The first circumstance that led to this equilibrium, which is the basis of the Constitution, was the exercise of political liberty under King John. The regaining of this sacred principle of primeval right will ever command the feelings and inspire the mind with the true principles of liberty. When the Executive Power exceeds the limits of justice, and usurps a tyranny which reason renounces and freedom disclaims, a people who once have tasted the blessings of liberty will dare to oppose, will rise to resist, and eventually will obtain. It was the excessive tyranny of the Conqueror and his successors that called forth the latent oppressed spirit of Englishmen, the seeds of liberty they had planted—The vegetation may be checked, may to a despot's flattered eye be eradicated, but the Sun of British freedom has ever dispelled the cloud of despotism, re-animated the hereditary seeds, and the vegetation has made arbitrary Monarchs tremble.

The formidable power of the first Norman Princes, who could crush the most powerful Baron at their pleasure, excited a spirit of union to deliberate among the different ranks of people, and close confederacies took place, to concert a resistance against the enormous power of the Crown. Here the Barons, as the chief landholders, associated,

ciated, and freely expatiated on the tyranny of the judicial proceedings, and the slavish injunctions of the forest laws *, the severity of which was particularly oppressive. In these confederacies a discussion of the precise terms and meaning of the new laws imposed by the Conqueror, must have appeared unintelligible to a great majority, the interpretation of them by the Barons could not have been conveyed to the capacities of the lower orders, without a colourable ray of sophistry, which would naturally excite an enquiry into the social rights of men, and renew to their minds the free principles of the Saxon institutions. The consequence followed, if we judge from effects, of their thorough conviction, that a limited power exceeded is a power forfeited; that equality of privileges is the first principle of society; that the union of power and property, in the hands of one or of a few, operates against the common interest of a community and against social right, and its oppressive laws or right of action may be opposed by a similar right.

* Another violent alteration of the English Constitution (in consequence of the Invasion) consisted in the depopulation of whole countries for the purpose of the King's royal diversion, and subjecting both them and all the ancient forests of the kingdom to the unreasonable severities of forest laws imported from the Continent, whereby the slaughter of a beast was made almost as penal as the death of a man. In the Saxon times, though no man was allowed to kill or chase the King's deer, yet he might start any game, pursue and kill it on his own estate. *Black. Comm. vol. IV. p. 415.*

Hence

Hence by an easy assimilation of principles, the subordinate classes became inspired with the true spirit of liberty, and we find them in the subsequent reign of Henry III. stipulating for the same conditions as the Barons themselves; and the Barons by * uniting with, and confirming the people in their rights, in order to oppose the rapacity of the Roman Church, and the power of the Crown, created that spirit of dignified human nature in John Bull, which having now ascertained the just prerogatives of the Crown, will ever check the overbearing spirit of an Aristocracy, and preserve the Constitution from arbitrary power, and the no less dangerous State, a convulsed Republic.

Some adventitious circumstances concurred to produce these rising sparks of ancient liberty. After the death of William Rufus, Henry I. secured his succession to the throne, to the exclusion of his elder brother Robert, by promising to restore the laws of Edward the Confessor, and other confirmations of Saxon liberties, which secured the people in their persons and property; for this purpose he granted a charter, which in the reign of King John the Barons made the foundation of *Magna Charta*. By the irregular successions of Henry I. and Stephen, the people made some advances for the regaining of political liberty; and

* Hume, Appendix, No. II. p. 113.

the concessions first made by Henry were particularly demanded at the coronation of every subsequent Monarch; but by them they had been considered merely as appendages to the Crown, to be put on or off at pleasure. John at his coronation took the usual oaths, but soon after discovered his despotic nature, by the horrid murder of his nephew Arthur. Imbruing his hands in the blood of so near a relation, shocked the humanity, and roused the indignation of the whole kingdom. On his arrival in England from the French provinces, he exerted the Royal prerogatives and the forest laws to that degree of excessive severity, that the dormant spirit of confederated liberty now openly manifested itself throughout the nation. The cause of freedom became the cause of justice; the cause of equal privileges the cause of truth; the union of the people was sober resistance; the efforts of the Barons were dignified; the opposition glorious and laudable. Hence were obtained the Great Charter of Liberties, which involves all the chief outlines of a legal Government, and provides for the equal distribution of justice, and free enjoyment of property, which Mr. Hume emphatically terms ** the great objects for which political society was at first founded by men; which the people have a perpetual and unalienable right to recall, and which no time nor precedent, nor statute, nor positive institution,*

* Hist. Eng. Vol. II. p. 88. *

ought to deter them from keeping ever uppermost in their thoughts and attention.

By this famous Charter, the Saxon free principles were incorporated with the feudal system, which laid the foundation of our truly limited Monarchy; and whoever at the present period reflects on the incorporation of those two opposite principles, and the present connexions and subordinations of our elaborate Constitution, cannot sufficiently admire the limitations and prerogatives of the Chief Magistrate. With the feudal system introduced by William I. many valuable energies were obtained; and this system, however at first subversive of the common rights of the people, has through successive ages been open to improvement, and as knowledge became progressively more general, it has been in a continual habit of acquiring perfection. At the Revolution it was pruned of its chief excesses, and attempted to be modelled to the interest of all. But practice ever tending to make theory blush, it remains for the present age to temper the energy of the Norman system with the lax principles of the old English, by a Parliamentary Reform; this will produce that necessary equilibrium, or balance of property and power, which is the basis of a limited Monarchy, and the first principle of our Constitution.

SECTION V.

Remarks on Political Liberty, from the Confirmation of Magna Charta, under King John, to the Succession of the House of Stuart.

THROUGHOUT the English History, we must carry in our minds the sacred truth, that political liberty is the birth-right of Britons; and though the several articles in Magna Charta, through the refinements made by the chicanery of modern law, are now considered as bare of circumstances, and too concise, and the charter itself an useless scroll, yet it contains, among other articles of universal justice and equal right, an explicit confirmation of the right of political liberty. This important article * is as follows:—" That if the
 " King, or his Justices, or Bailiffs, or any of his
 " Ministers, offend any person contrary to any of
 " the said articles, or transgress any article of this
 " peace and security, and that such miscarriage be
 " made known to four of the said five and twenty
 " Barons, those four Barons shall go to the King,
 " or to his Justiciary, if the King be out of the
 " realm, declaring to him that such an abuse is
 " committed, and shall desire him to cause it spee-
 " dily to be redressed; and if the King, or (if he be

* 64th.

“ out of the realm) his Justiciary do not redress it;
 “ *Then the said four Barons shall report the same to*
 “ *the residue of the said five and twenty Barons; and*
 “ *then those five and twenty Barons, with the Com-*
 “ *monalty of England, may distress us by all the ways*
 “ *they can; to wit, by seizing on our castles, lands,*
 “ *and possessions; and by what other means they can,*
 “ *till it be amended, as they shall adjudge, saving*
 “ *our own person, the person of our Queen, and the*
 “ *persons of our children; and when it is amended,*
 “ *they shall be subject to us as before.*”

The language of this Covenant is very harsh, and the condition itself appears ill suited to produce either peace or good order in the State, or to assure the real liberty of the subject. It was no doubt suitable to the genius of the times; civil liberty could not thrive in a community altogether military, and in a state of vassalage; but with the abolition of this military dependance, the Constitution became better known; and though the substance of this article has been modelled to the exigencies of good government, the people have not, nor cannot relinquish the principle, it being their indefeasible, unalienable right. By this condition it must have followed, that the power of the King was very materially retrenched, and it must have thrown an immense power into the hands of the Aristocracy; the truth of which appears, with some trifling intermission, down to the Revolution. The

whole of this long period seems to have been a fluctuating struggle between political liberty and the usurpations of Monarchs, Priests and ambitious Barons. Upon this express stipulation in Magna Charta, on behalf of the commonalty, to resist the higher powers, the memorable oppositions of Tyler, Cade, &c. were lawfully made. Recurrences to political liberty which must render their conduct venerable in the estimation of every impartial and sincere friend to the Constitution, which appears to owe its excellence to extreme cases and extreme arguments. The true spirit of liberty boldly faces its enemies; conscious truth gives ardour to common right; and though tyranny prevail, and priestcraft triumph, we are bound by reason and history to acknowledge that the truest friends to mankind have been those who have nobly sacrificed their private interests for the public good, and gloriously bled in the common cause.

As this famous Charter is the first on record of the *Leges Scriptæ*; or Statute Laws, and lays the foundation of our present form of Parliament, the controversies which have arisen on the origin of the House of Commons, and the rights of the people to an equal representation, are reduced to mere quibbles about words. If we take an enlarged view of those circumstances which attend all revolutions, our prejudices will not then ascribe Magna Charta and the being of Parliament to the grace
and

and favour of Monarchs ; nor can the most enthusiastic advocate for liberty wholly ascribe them to the foresight and wisdom of their ancestors. It has been found in every material innovation or change of Government, that less is due to the sagacity of the laity or the virtues of the clergy, than to those fortuitous events which constitute the laws of the universe ; to those immutable laws, which ever operating on matter, produce those seeming irregularities in human systems, which render every institution mutable, and every Government a type of the human heart. With this remark we shall consider the circumstances of this important period, and we shall find the obtaining Magna Charta, as well as the subsequent revolutions, was owing to the fluctuating principles of property.

The feudal system introduced by the Conqueror threw the balance of property, and with that the balance of power, entirely into the hands of the Crown, which created * a subordination of vassalage from the King to the meanest gentleman, and the consequent slavery of the lower people. The King being the supreme Lord of all the landed property, it followed that † all the lands in England were derived from, and holden, mediately or immediately from the Crown ; and which William

* Hume, vol. II. p. 265. † Black. Comm. vol. IV. p. 418.

had conferred on his chief Barons, subject to the military services of 60,000 Knights fees.

But the balance of property, having its foundation in nature, cannot be immutably fixed by either of the two extremes, a Norman feudal tenure, or an Utopian levelling system. The usurped power of a few in a large community cannot retain it for any length of time from the many, particularly when the public mind is impressed with the spirit of liberty, or the diffusion of knowledge has undermined superstition, and dispelled the cloud of ignorance, which two enemies of reason and truth are the main springs on which despotism and priestcraft move. The House of Commons therefore, and the partial representation of the people, originated from the variable principles of the balance of property, by the accidental divisions of the exorbitant estates of the Norman Barons, and the consequent abolition of military tenures, * these immense Baronies were divided by provisions to younger children, by partitions to co-heirs, by sale, or by escheating to the King, who gratified a great number of his courtiers by dealing them out in smaller portions, by which a middle rank was formed, which became very numerous, and at the period of obtaining Magna Charta formed a very respect-

* Hume, Vol. II. p. 268.

able order in the State ; and as they were all immediate vassals of the Crown by military tenure, they were, by the principles of the feudal law, entitled to a seat in the national councils. It is unreasonable to suppose, that when the various divisions and sub-divisions of property had abolished the military tenures, which entitled the tenants to a seat in the national councils, they should have forfeited their right to a future share in the motions of Government, or have entirely disregarded that privilege. On the contrary, it is more reasonable to conclude, they became more anxious for their property, and attentive to their rights. By the abolition of military tenures, personal services were exchanged for pecuniary supplies ; the minds of men were turned to agriculture and commerce ; property acquired an estimation, and became the first moving principle in private life, as well as the great object of the public mind ; this great period may therefore be regarded as the dawn of a revolution from a military to a commercial age ; the obtaining Magna Charta laid the foundation of that great event ; the Reformation gave it spirit and motion ; and under Elizabeth it assumed a body and figure.

The accidental and gradual abolition of military tenures accelerated the attainment of that due balance of property which is the foundation of a free Government, by constituting a Legislative power, partly composed of the labouring part of the community,

munity, to counteract the oppression and encroachments of the rich and powerful. This revival of the ancient British free principles arose, as before observed, by the union of the Barons with the subordinate ranks, to concert resistance against the Crown. And the future right to this co-operation was confirmed by the 64th article of the Charter, which impowers the commonalty of England to oppose the King if he violated their liberties. The subsequent civil wars to which this condition gave birth, prove how little civil Government was known in that military age; a rising of the commonalty in England in arms against the King was productive of infinite evils, and attended with animosities for which death itself could only atone. But happily, the immortal Earl of Leicester laid the foundation of an institution, * which in process of time became one of the most useful and powerful members of the national Constitution. This great Baron, under Henry III. gloriously opposing the thunders of the Roman Church, and the weakness and wickedness of the King, summoned a Parliament in the year 1265, to which he ordered returns to be made of two Knights from each shire, and Deputies from the cities and boroughs. Upon this first precedent of our present House of Commons, it is impossible to split and divide an idea, and render a general covenant a partial one. If

* Hume, vol. II. p. 211.

Commonalty of England were impowered by Magna Charta to oppose the abuse of their liberties by the King, the commonalty of all England are entitled, without a shadow of doubt, to an equal representation in the House of Commons, the origin of which arose from changing a hostile resistance into a legal form. This is the true principle on which the House of Commons is founded. It is general, it is universal, it is the birth-right of Britons; that this principle; which extends to all, and is the right of every man, should be reduced to common right in abstract, to partial representation and monopoly, could only arise from the state of military vassalage under which the great majority of the people laboured for many years, added to the ignorance and superstition which for many subsequent centuries the Roman Church encouraged.

In the subsequent reign of Edward I. this precedent of Leicester's, which was in fact * a privilege covenanted in Magna Charta, obtained so much on the public mind, that Edward found his edicts for raising talliages and aids could not be carried into effect, without summoning representatives from cities and boroughs to Parliament; and one of the Parliaments of this reign obtained from Edward the most important statute in the whole English code. The statute *de tallagio non conce-*

* Blackstone Comm. vol. IV. p. 225.

dendo, which decrees that no tax shall be laid, nor impost levied, without the joint consent of the Lords and the Commons.* This statute was the engine which protected the Charter itself, and by the help of which the people were thenceforth to make a legal conquest over the Crown.

Many arbitrary writers, I conclude, embrace a mistake, merely to accommodate their principles, when they affirm that the representatives of the people returned from cities and borough towns were an order of men who had ever been considered as too mean to enjoy a place in the national councils. This conclusion would not have been doubted, if we were not informed, that, under the feudal law, military tenants were entitled to a seat in the Norman Parliaments, and that the House of Commons in its present form derives its origin from the abolition of military tenures, and from the covenant in Magna Charta empowering the Barons and the commonalty of England to oppose the oppression of the Monarch. Hence the term Commons, from the word commonalty, was merely giving a new name to the same order of men. The military tenants were the Knights and Gentry, who upon this revolution got themselves elected for their respective counties, cities, and boroughs, in which they resided; and with the progress of com-

* De Lolme, c. 11. p. 40.

merce and literature, obtained a preponderance in the Constitution, and a powerful influence in the motions of Government, a consequence which naturally followed, after shaking off the burden of military vassalage. The representatives of the people elected in the cities, counties, and boroughs, were from this period legally established as a constituent part of the Constitution; and it was ordained under Edward III.*, that Parliaments shall be held once a year, or oftener if need be, which was a † renewal of the Saxon law of holding Parliaments.

And a House of Commons as thus constituted, when freely chosen and freely acting, has, in numerous instances, proved the only assurance for the free operation of the Constitution, and the stable support of freedom. And notwithstanding it was by variable, yet progressive accessions, that it became a permanent and powerful establishment, at that period it was a very important point obtained for the body of people, to convene in a legal manner, armed with liberty, reason, and truth, instead of the shield, the buckler, and battering ram, to demolish the King's castle, and seize on his possessions for redress of grievances.

* 4 Edw. III. c. 14. and 36 Edw. III. c. 9.

† Mirror of Justice, c. 1. f. 3. and c. 5. f. 1.

In the subsequent reign of Edward II. the Commons * began to annex petitions to the bills by which they granted subsidies. This was the first dawn of their legislative authority. Under Edward III. they declared they would not in future acknowledge any law to which they had not expressly assented. Soon after this they exerted a privilege, in which consisted, at this time, one of the great bulwarks of the Constitution; they impeached, and procured to be condemned, some of the Ministers of State. Under the weak and turbulent reign of Richard II. the King endeavoured to poison the integrity, and oppose the growing independence of the Commons, by secret and corrupt influence. One article alledged against him, and to which he confessed, was in the following words, as they appear on the Rolls—† 19 *Item*.
 “ Although by statute, and the custom of his
 “ realm, in the calling of every Parliament, and
 “ to lay open their grievances, and to prosecute
 “ for remedies thereupon as they think fit, not-
 “ withstanding the said King, that in his Parlia-
 “ ments he might obtain his will, which was rash,
 “ often directed his mandates to his Sheriffs, that
 “ they should return certain persons, nominated by
 “ the King himself, as Knights of the Shires,
 “ which Knights indeed he could make pliable to
 “ him, and as he very often did, sometimes by

* De Lolme, c. iiii. p. 41. † Henry IV. m. 20.

“ various threats and terrors, and sometimes by
 “ gifts, to consent to those things which were
 “ prejudicial to the realm, and extremely burden-
 “ some to the people.”

From this reign down to that of Henry VII. was a continued scene of insurrections and wars. No part of the English history since the Conquest is so uncertain, and so little authentic, as the wars of the Houses of York and Lancaster; at the conclusion of which the nobility were brought to a humble submission to the stern prerogatives of the Crown. The people were reduced to their former state of vassalage, and the improvement of the Constitution wholly neglected—*Nam silent leges inter arma*—and we are left to deplore a disgraceful period of history, * a scene of horror, bloodshed, savage manners, arbitrary executions, and treacherous, dishonourable conduct in all parties.

The union of these two contending families by the marriage of Henry VII. quelled each jarring interest; and the reformation in the next reign, which occasioned a great revolution in manners and property, paved the way for ascertaining the equilibrium necessary in the Three Estates, by imperceptibly weakening the Aristocracy, advancing the Commons, and limiting the Prerogative; and

* Hume, vol. III. p. 33.

finally concurred to the restoration of the ancient limited Monarchy, which was confirmed by the Revolution. Yet in the intermediate reigns, the Crown, while this great Revolution was maturing, became progressively * more arbitrary, by those very means which afterwards reduced its power.

The wars of the two Roses put an entire stop to trade for several years; and the Commons were reduced to such an abject dependance on the King, the Clergy, and the Barons, during the despotic reign of Henry. VIII. that they seemed to have totally lost that inspiration for their ancient liberties, which pervaded and animated the whole State during the reigns of John, Henry, and Edward I. And no reign in the English history holds out a more serious truth than this of Henry VIII. For though there be no danger that the nation, while animated with the spirit of liberty, will again relapse into such a base and servile dependance on a rude tyrannic barbarian, yet the principle teaches the important lesson, That Government, in the hands of an ambitious Prince, may be modelled to the despotic bias of his heart, though the forms of a free Constitution remain; and that those barriers which political liberty has provided in the Constitution to maintain freedom, life, and property, may be made, by direct or indirect means, salvos

* Black. Comm. vol. IV. p. 433.

for the grossest enormities. Henry extorted loans from the people which he never meant to repay, and loaded them with oppressive taxes; and the first men in the nation were made to tremble at his displeasure, against whom he perpetrated violences the most enormous. But he never attempted to abolish the Parliament, or even to retrench its doubtful privileges. On the contrary, he made it the prime minister of his tyranny, the passive instrument of his outrages against liberty life, and law. It sanctioned his despotic and sanguinary measures, and authorized his oppressive taxes; and to the eternal disgrace of the Parliaments of this reign, they enacted that the King's Proclamations should have the force of law, and by creating a long list of chimerical treasons, have rendered the memory of them infamous.

From these facts we may conclude, that the long civil wars of the Roses had so depressed the national spirit, that as the vigour of the national body failed by the division of its parts, the sovereign power of the Crown became by consequence more arbitrary and unlimited; and England at this æra was arrived at an ebb, which was either to flow to slavery or freedom. At the moment when transitory evils had thrown the Constitution into the gulph of Despotism, the Reformation by a fortuitous event, wafted the bark of Freedom over the quicksands of Priestcraft and Tyranny, roused the
Genius

Genius of Liberty, which in the subsequent reigns animated the spirit of the nation to assert the privileges of a free people; and happily that sacred spirit of liberty has never since forsaken the British isle.

In the subsequent reign of Edward VI. the tyrannical laws and new-fangled treasons instituted by Henry, his father, were happily abolished. This virtuous youth was adorned with the light of reason, with a heart graced with promising dispositions, and a capacity to learn and judge; but to the infinite concern of the friends of liberty and the Protestant cause, his reign was cut short under his people's smiles; and so easy is the transition from human joy to sorrow, by the blood-thirst Mary, their smiles were succeeded by tears. Milton's Satan under Papal colours ravaged the land, revelled in the tortures of reason and truth; and in this *monstrous* reign, ignorance was no protection, when even brutes were sacrificed to the Popish faith. On the accession of Elizabeth, England, reviving from the general stupor, began to breathe; and Elizabeth embracing the Protestant religion, blessed the Isle with a long and brilliant reign. But such was the analogy between sovereign power and despotism, that a Princess the most enlightened, and of the most splendid talents, could not separate the long cherished idea of former reigns from that which is a Sovereign's ultimate happiness and final security—*the affections of their people*. The

Star Chamber was still continued, and the High Commission Court even instituted to systemize confidence and enforce obedience. The extreme miseries of the last reign, and the glory of this lessened the tyranny of these institutions; and the wisdom of Elizabeth, as it tempered oppression, the people in the admiration of the one, overlooked the other.

SECTION VI.

*Remarks on Political Liberty, from the Succession of
the House of Stuart to the Revolution.*

THE nation at this period began to find the happy effects of the Reformation. The great alteration in property advanced the power of the Commons; the art of printing began to disseminate learning throughout the State, and to enlarge the minds of men; trade and navigation were suddenly carried on to an amazing extent; an inundation of wealth flowed in upon the merchants and middling ranks; the Popish Clergy had been detected in their frauds and abuses, and stripped of their lands and revenues, were left trembling for their very existence. “* But there
“ is no abuse so great in civil society, as not to
“ be attended with beneficial consequences to
“ some: and in the beginning of reformations,
“ the loss of these advantages is always felt very
“ sensibly, while the benefits resulting from the
“ change is the slow effect of time.” This accounts for the prejudices of the House of Stuart in favour of Popery, that engine of despotism, which was

* Hume, vol. III. p. 236.

the cause of the civil wars, and the unfortunate catastrophe of that high prerogative family. That Monarchs should favour every institution which deprives the people of their rights and liberties, is the natural consequence of human ambition. But that there should be found any considerable disinterested number, or even one individual, possessed of this astonishing predilection for despotism, is wonderful. The partisans of that unhappy family, and the advocates of the present day for arbitrary power, evince how difficult it is to eradicate prejudices when deeply rooted in the human breast. The partisans of the Stuarts may be compared to Mary I. who declared *, “ She never read Protestant books, and thanked God that as she never had, so she hoped never to read any of them.” Ignorance in an illiterate age may be admitted as a veil for many enormities, but the enemies to liberty and reform among the moderns can only plead self-interest—Individual integrity, the public good, and the national freedom, they consider as meritorious sacrifices for their own aggrandizement. Hence ignorance, self-interest, and prejudice, eclipse the history of man. One age decries the ignorance and prejudices of the last; succeeding ages the corruption and vices of the times; and posterity, finally, rests on the frailty of human nature.

* Hume, vol. IV. p. 436.

Of all the frailties in the human catalogue, prejudice is the least defensible; it deprives the mind of its noblest faculty, that reasoning principle which distinguishes a human being from a brute; and though ignorance be the cause, yet it scorns the conviction of the fact by which it is flattered. With this ignoble principle the Stuart family ascended the British Throne. Ignorant of civil government, though learned in the law of despotic precedents; and prejudiced by the example of their predecessors, their narrow minds could not perceive the amazing revolution both of property and religious sentiment which had taken place since the Reformation.

James, the first King of the Stuart race, was less a tyrant than an enthusiast. Enthusiasm delights in chimera; and in the brain of James it alighted on a fruitful soil. The divinity of Kings was his political creed; the absurd doctrine of divine right had seized on his mind, and his tongue chimed with the theme. With the pedantry of a collegian, in his private conversation, his writings, and his public speeches, he was continually asserting*, That the authority of Kings was not to be controlled any more than that of God himself; like him they were omnipotent; and that the privileges which the people laid claim to as

* See his speeches made in Parliament in the year 1610—21.

their inheritance and birth-right were no more than the effects of the grace and toleration of his Royal ancestors. Thus James ostentatiously displayed those fallacies which his ancestors and the Pope had invented. Passive obedience and non-resistance had been taught by the Clergy; but former Monarchs were content in the enjoyment of that deception which James had the imprudence to publish. The liberty of the press, then in its dawn, contributed, notwithstanding the Star-Chamber, to disseminate such salutary notions among all orders of the people, as detected the sophisms delivered from the throne and the pulpit, and finally concurred in the refutation of the divinity of Kings, by teaching Charles I. his son, that Kings rule by the grace of the people, and that they never can assume the sacred privilege of ruling by the grace of God, but when they govern according to the laws of the land, according to general liberty, virtue, and justice.

The private character of Charles is represented as virtuous, but his public character vicious; Nature had been kind, but his education, as in the words of the Poet, triumphed.

By education most men are misled,
 So we believe because we were so bred;
 The priest continues what the nurse began,
 And thus the child imposes on the man.

Encircled by a few, who in their hearts cherished the doctrine of the Pope, yet wore the semblance of the Protestant Church, Charles was incessantly flattered with his father's maxim of Divine right, and the unlimited prerogative of his predecessors, which he manifested on all occasions. The nation detected the fiction, and in turn freely canvassed the prerogatives of the Crown. The scrutiny proved fatal; rather let us say, when reason and justice prevail over arbitrary power and priestcraft, *a triumph*. Political liberty was asserted and maintained by the representatives of the people; the Commons alone stood firm, when the power of the Nobles was vanquished.

Among the Commons were men of professed abilities, and acknowledged Statesmen—Men who entered warmly into constitutional measures—Men whose views were as solid as their principles were just; these opposed to the *jure divino* of Charles the *vox populi vox Dei*—The Divinity of law—in the law alone was the Divine Power; and every law founded on liberty and justice had a claim for obedience, Royalty itself not exempt. This was the voice of the people sanctioned by the immutable laws of the Deity. But the King had been taught, that the supreme power was inherent in the Crown; that the legislative authority must comport with the dictates of his heart,
that

that the executive authority could only originate from the active impulse of his divine mind.

Both powers thus claimed a divine origin; but it requires not the sagacity of a Pope to perceive, that the people's was that of the Gospel, the King's that of the Alcoran. Charles became a convert, but by his apostacy met his fate. The stern brow of Prerogative, supported by the delusion of Divine right, could not brook the fancied ignominy of relaxing its sovereign power, by submitting to the future wisdom and control of Parliament. Charles repeatedly dissolved his Parliaments for their integrity and patriotism, and continued to practise every illegal measure. The perversion of the law by corrupt judges, and the imprisonment of the subject for default of payment of ship-money, and other obnoxious and arbitrary taxes, operated in fanning the flame of discord among all ranks of people, and created those lasting prejudices, which his concessions in his last Parliament could not allay.

The famous Petition of Right, framed by a Committee of his third Parliament, sets forth, in an explicit manner the violent abuses of the prerogative, and best explains the pretensions of the Commons, who appear to have assumed no unprecedented privileges, or demanded unusual powers. The Bill of Rights, which was enacted in conse-

quence, was declaratory of the known statutes of the land, and a recognition of the Great Charter, and that important statute of Edward I. for raising *taillages*, which is the bulwark of the Constitution.

The firmness and independence of the Parliaments of this reign afford the highest example of their specific utility. The consequences which followed amply shew the absolute necessity that the representatives of the people should be independent of the frowns or secret influence of the Crown, but that they should never be independent of the choice of the people. Free Parliaments and frequent elections are the deputies of political liberty, and the members and spirit of the Constitution, and cannot be annulled without annihilating the machine. When Parliaments are free, civil liberty is assured from every act, overt or secret, that tyranny can invent, or proud ambition stimulate,

Happy had Charles been, happy indeed would have been the nation, had he as solicitously endeavoured to gain the affections of his people as he was industrious in every chicanery to trample on their sacred rights, and violate every principle of justice. But the King could not reconcile restraints or limitations of that Divine power with which the Great Author of Nature had vested him; an authority, which for base mortals to dispute, in
his

his estimation, amounted to blasphemy. His evasions in confirming the Bill of Rights prove his submission was concealed hypocrisy ; his conduct and discourse discovered the insincerity of his heart. The first opportunity that offered he violated all that he had done, dissolved the Parliament, and in future was determined to govern by himself supreme, which he did for eleven years, when his various despotic ways and means failing, his urgent necessities induced him to call another Parliament, which possessing the same patriotic spirit of those which had formerly been the occasion of his displeasure, he abruptly dissolved it, but soon after convoked another, which wisely began its career by impeaching, and procuring to be punished the King's evil counsellors, the secret enemies of liberty, peace, and concord ; and the mutual agreement of the King and Commons bid fair to restore once more the calm return of promised harmony, Charles having in Parliament abolished the Star Chamber and High Commission Courts, and enacted statutes for Triennial Parliaments, for ascertaining the forest laws, and renouncing Ship Money and other exactions. But the true cause of the national discontent under the Stuart family now manifested itself. The cruelties of Mary had left an indelible stain on the Catholic faith, and created a jealousy in the British breast, which the least breath of suspicion fanned into a flame. Unfortunately this family indirectly coun-

tenanced

tenanced the Roman church : and in the dawn of general literature, it followed, that theological points, discussed by rustic reason, would beget fanaticism. Unacquainted with logical refinements and the subtleties of schoolmen, any learned opposition to their opinions they considered as sophistry ; their minds dwelt on enthusiasm as inspiration : and in a common cause, which under the gospel dispensation, required the laws to be administered with justice and mercy, and equal right to be done, where each had an equal claim to the enjoyment of liberty, it was a natural consequence that the Puritans should imagine they possessed the Divine favour, and that their cause was that of the Lord's. The extremes which followed were in proportion to the oppression suffered. Religious dissensions were now rising to a flame. The King had broke with the Scots, and the Irish were in rebellion ; and Charles having, by his former conduct, lost the confidence of the nation, his situation became desperate. The Commons, to secure their authority, had taken advantage of the King's necessities, and obtained from him the fatal consent for their unlimited duration, exempt from the control of his prerogative ; which rash measure was attended with the most fatal consequences. One tyrant is more tolerable than five hundred ; the one has his moments of relaxation, the many are invariably and inflexibly the same ; the gathering storm now raged from every quarter ; the most discordant

discordant passions which harrass the human mind, composed the element of anarchy; and in the thunder storm of civil war, the unhappy Charles fell, an awful example of lawless majesty; and the Commonwealth which succeeded is another lawless example, and shews too evidently the wide difference between theoretical models of polity and practical ones. On this overthrow of the Constitution, Mr. De Lolme judiciously observes, the

“ English made fruitless attempts to substitute a
 “ Republican Government in its stead, subjected
 “ at first to the power of the principal leaders in
 “ the Long Parliament; they saw it afterwards
 “ parcelled out among the Chiefs of different bo-
 “ dies of troops, and thus shifting without end
 “ from one kind of subjection to another; they
 “ were at length convinced, that an attempt to
 “ establish liberty in a great nation, by making
 “ the people interfere in the common business of
 “ Government, is of all attempts the most chi-
 “ merical; that the authority of ALL, with which
 “ men are amused, is in reality no more than the
 “ authority of a few powerful individuals who di-
 “ vide the Republic. They at last rested in the
 “ bosom of the only Constitution which is fit for
 “ a great State and a free people. I mean that
 “ in which a chosen number deliberate, and a
 “ single hand executes.”

How necessary is Monarchy when duly limited? How futile and vain are the attempts of a multitude to maintain liberty on a pure foundation, when there is no object to obey, but a code of laws executed by a number of men, equal in person, equal in claim, and equal in right? Where they demand allegiance they create jealousy; where they enforce subjection, they sow envy and malice; a division of interest takes place; the rich and powerful maintain an usurped authority; and the people, after a momentary excess of liberty, find, to their sorrow, the vain delusion of natural right, the chimerical dream of unrestrained liberty. An arbitrary Government, by restraining the passions, and enforcing subjection, is in fact far the more eligible and happy than a convulsed Republic.

From this memorable struggle for the prerogatives of the Crown and the privileges of Parliament, there arises two reflections. 1st. That whether the Executive Power, by coercive measures can subdue the Parliament to its will, or by secretly and corruptly influencing the representatives of the people, can separate the common interest, the Government becomes arbitrary and absolute. 2nd. That when the representatives of the people can render themselves a permanent body, by an overt act obtained by consent of the King for their unlimited duration, or when a Par-
liament

liament shall abolish the kingly office, or when Members of Parliament, by obtaining boroughs, can make their election independent of their constituents, the Government likewise becomes arbitrary and absolute.

The conclusion from these facts and reasonings is the confirmation of that known apothegm, That England never can be ruined but by a Parliament. The secret and corrupt influence of the Executive Power over the Parliaments of the present century, afford a degrading contrast to the Commons of Charles's reign. Posterity will not again experience overt responsible acts from the Crown. Its very antagonists are now become the instruments of its power, and oppression has shifted sides. This evil can only be remedied by an equal and free representation, and the public mind is preparing for the event.

Charles II. was wholly indebted to the destruction of civil liberty by the Commonwealth for his restoration. By a well-timed and judicious exercise of political liberty by a convention of the States, the Constitution was regained; but it was found that the King had not profited by the example of his father, the same arbitrary principles mantling in his veins, operated in a converse direction, more plausible, but not the less dangerous. Charles, by the diversity of his fortune, had formed
a judgment

a judgment of men, which a thorough knowledge of the world confirms, That a principle of self-interest predominates in general to the exclusion of public virtue, and too often that of moral obligations. He saw the error of his father in contending with a Parliament, and with a people who inherited a Constitution formed by laws breathing a bold and independent spirit of liberty. The last House of Commons that consented to a law for its own unlimited duration, which had abolished the elective power of the people for near twenty years, furnished him with a precedent, that the representatives of the people were willing to make a separate interest from their constituents, and that by a Parliament the outward form and figure of the Constitution might be preserved, yet he might by indirect means extend his prerogative to any height he chose; for if he could separate the interest of the Commons from that of the people, by influencing a majority to the interests of the Crown, he could govern the nation at his will, leaving the people destitute of any power to redress their grievances. Upon this principle, after the convention of the States had settled him on the throne, he issued his writs for convoking a Parliament; and the people, long harrassed by the anarchy of the Commonwealth, submitted the election to his own management, by which means he procured the memorable pensioned Parliament, and afterwards was guilty of every dissipation and tyranny,

uniting

uniting with the high prerogative of his father the principles of a debauchee; and the national spirit, depressed with continued scenes of despotism, tamely suffered her most virtuous patriots to be inhumanly butchered. But notwithstanding the tyrannical disposition of the King*, the happy concurrence of circumstances was such, that from this reign we may date not only the re-establishment of our Church and Monarchy, but also the complete restitution of English liberty, for the first time since its total abolition at the Conquest, by abolishing the slavish tenures of the feudal system, which removed those oppressive appendages which incumbered the estates of the subject; as also providing additional security of his person from imprisonment, by that great bulwark of the Constitution, the Habeas Corpus Act, by constituting triennial Parliaments, the Test and Corporation Acts, and other wholesome statutes, which added such weight to the Commons, as gave them sufficient power and influence effectually to resist the invasions of the Royal prerogative, which the next reign fully exemplified.

James II. inherited the family spirit of Divine right, and by his Popish partisans improved on the principles of his brother, by laying the axe at once to the root of freedom. But in attempting

* Black. Comm. vol. IV. p. 438.

to render the Government as absolute as the Inquisition of their foster parent at Rome, roused John Bull's ancestors to exert the privileges of a free people, and by the Revolution excluded this Catholic race for ever.

We are now arrived at that grand epoch in which political liberty was exercised in a most conspicuous and orderly manner, highly to the interests of the nation, and honourable to the acting parties. Political liberty ever inspires the most liberal views; upon this principle I shall continue my remarks on this important period.

With the progress of the English History, we are told the Constitution became better understood and improved. Upon this theorem, the relation between Governors and the governed, and the nature of a limited monarchy, acquires at the present day arguments drawn from the experienced effects of the Revolution; and though, perhaps, differing from the sentiments advanced by some, may, nevertheless, tend to improve the elucidation of the contract between King and people; at the same time the measures adopted at the Revolution correspond with the subsequent postulate of our social compact.

We have seen that the Norman system for a time annihilated the free principles of the Anglo-Saxons,

Saxons, whose institutions form the basis of our Constitution, and that the people, by a variable exertion of their free privileges, under the tyranny and usurpations of subsequent Monarchs, were progressively recovering and improving the Constitution. Inspired with the free spirit of the Great Alfred, whose noble soul breathed that immortal sentiment preserved in his will, “ * That it was “ just the English should for ever remain as “ free as their own thoughts.” The nation waded through a sea of blood to regain his principles, † which, prior to this memorable Æra, were completely restored since their total abolition at the Conquest. This circumstance enables us to judge on what ground the Revolutionists acted. They had recovered their Constitution of a limited Monarchy, and all parties seemed unanimous in that opinion, which is the only one superior to the contract between a King and people, which is, *That the Constitution is sacred and inviolable.* I do affirm there cannot be a doctrine more inimical to the interests of the people than to assert, that if the Chief Magistrate violates the contract, and forfeits the Throne, the Constitution is dissolved, consequently all its institutions annihilated, and laws repealed. The contract on the part of the King is to administer the Constitution as he finds it. “ ‡ He can neither make any alteration or

* Hume, vol. I. p. 96.

† Black. Comm. vol. IV. p. 439—Charles II. 1679.

‡ Fortescue, c. IX.

“ change in the laws of the realm without consent
 “ of the subject, nor burthen them with strange
 “ impositions.” And as the law gives the
 King his prerogative, and gives jurisdiction to
 the House of Lords, and limits the jurisdiction
 of the House of Commons, these restraints on
 the existing constituent parts of Government,
 must originate from the nation, when it had
 reference to its original capacity of delegating
 power, by political liberty, the last recurrence
 to which was at the Restoration; and the
 nation in its original character was at the Re-
 volution, and is at this day, and for ever, legally
 authorized to reform such serious abuses in the
 constituent parts of Government, as amount to a
 subversion of those powers to which it had primi-
 tively given distinct privileges, separate forms, yet
 a joint body, and concentrated power, to be exer-
 cised only for the public security, the common
 good and private happiness of the people.

The first power in the State is Political Liberty,
 unalienable, always existing.

The second power, the Constitution sacred and
 inviolable.

The third power, the Three Estates, as one
 united body, subordinate and relative, sworn to
 administer the Constitution with justice and truth ;
 and

and in the legal discharge of their duty, these powers are absolute, and without control.

But in order to prevent abuses of powers so transcendent and absolute, each power forms a mutual check on the other; and the only security the people have against the Constitution's being invaded is by the Third Estate, their representatives; and that so important a trust should not be violated, wholesome * laws have been provided, which declare what persons shall be denied this trust; and laws are also provided to secure the freedom of election. The facts on the face of history, since the Revolution, prove these laws to be inadequate; and the experience of a century shows, that a reform in the representation is now absolutely necessary.

From the reign of Elizabeth down to the Revolution, the Parliaments in general had acted with so much patriotism, and so conformable to constitutional liberty, that the public mind never suggested the idea of a reform in the representation; added to which, the violence of parties since the Restoration had run so high, that the Revolutionists were content to sacrifice future prospects of advantage by temporizing; and upon consulting the popular sentiment, they found it necessary to compromise, rather than openly avow

* Black. Comm vol. I. p. 162.

either their wishes or the apparent necessity of stipulating for more extensive advantages in favour of Democracy, the factious spirit of which had before overthrown the Constitution.

The great object of public concern was to limit and ascertain the just prerogatives of the Crown, and to continue the succession in a collateral branch of the same family. And further, what was deeply impressed on the heart of every true Englishman was to secure the Protestant religion. In the Prince of Orange were found qualities eminently adapted to the important occasion, and whose principles were perfectly congenial with the Revolutionists, consequently he became the object of universal adoration. The legality of his accession was in strict conformity to the true principles of the Constitution; to elucidate which I shall assume an hypothesis, and apply the fact to the principle. Pre-supposing therefore the Constitution to have been recovered at the Restoration, and presuming the representatives of the people, at the Revolution, to have been independent and true to constitutional principles, the Constitution may be termed a machine, composed of a number of wheels, one within the other. The outer one, composed of the body of people, may be called the Wheel of Liberty, which in its evolution communicates its powers to the various internal wheels, till it reaches the centre, which may be termed the Executive, or
the

Crown, whose powers consist of a perpetual spring of action and re-action ; but by deriving its active property from the outer Wheel of Liberty, it is virtually subordinate to that, as possessing the original principle of motion ; by which circumstance the centre, or Executive Wheel, can never depart from its fixed laws of motion, without infringing upon the original one of Liberty ; and as the primeval active power is inherent in the latter, the remedy is also as well as the supply of every defect. Hence the death of a Monarch can never destroy the Executive Wheel without annihilating the machine. The consequence follows, * the King in his political capacity never dies ; and on a parity of reasoning, an unprecedented vacancy or abdication of the Throne cannot annihilate the machine : for the perpetuity of the Executive Power keeps the component parts together, till the defect is peaceably supplied, even when there are no precedents or written laws to guide the popular mind. It is of the highest importance to the internal peace of the State, to the harmony and order of society, that the Constitution should be considered, under all contingencies, sacred and inviolable.

A Constitution thus pure in its principles, and equal in its parts, contains a primary interest,

* Black. Comm. vol. I. p. 249.

which every member proportionably shares. And one common interest pervading the whole community, the theory of Government is rendered simple, and easily understood. But the practice will ever require wisdom, founded on integrity, in those who direct its motions, which is the most irrefragable argument for frequent elections and frequent Parliaments.

To compare this theoretical diagram to the facts which occurred, we shall find them accord.

James II. had abdicated the Throne, and by that abdication the Throne became vacant and forfeited. By what authority did the Convention assume a legislative capacity to supply that defect? By recurring, *ex necessitate rei*, to political liberty, the original power in the State, which bears analogy to the diagram stated, wherein I have endeavoured to make it appear, that the perpetuity of the Executive Power keeps the component parts together, by a necessary relation the whole bears to form one system.

The application therefore to the Prince of Orange, and the Convention which assembled in consequence, and the several laws established, were strictly legal and constitutional, as further appears by the following precedents. After the death of William Rufus, Henry I. by flattering promises

promises made to the people, was, by a Convention, settled on the Throne, to the exclusion of his elder brother, Robert; and the confirmation of liberties passed by him under the Great Seal was held as conclusive as any laws enacted by a Monarch in direct descent. And in the subsequent reign, Stephen was settled on the Throne by such another Convention, to the exclusion of the Empress Matilda. And at the death of Henry III. Prince Edward being then abroad, the nation resorted to political liberty, and without summons, the Prelates, Nobility, and Commonalty assembled, and settled the Government till the King returned, and their acts were held legal. And in the 10th year of Richard II. the Parliament sent a solemn message to the King, that by an ancient statute they had power to depose a King who would not behave himself as he ought, and be ruled by the laws of the realm. And the Parliament convened for the restoration of Charles II. assembled without summons, or authority from the King, yet the laws which were then enacted were afterwards confirmed; such Convention having assembled according to political liberty, the first principle of the Constitution.

The succession to the Crown is limited, and incapacities are attached to the legal possession of it, which render the inheritance a matter of right in the nation, and not a matter of

right in any Prince, unless he be free from the incapacities created by the people, and established by law. If this be not admitted, * a Prince may claim the Throne, possessed of all the incapacities which would render the intervention of the people necessary, by Convention or Parliament, to exclude him, and elect another from the same family, whereby we learn a distinction between a right of inheritance and a right of succession; for there can be no right of inheritance in defiance to the will of the law; and † a Prince claiming the Crown, by being next heir to his father, or other relative, must subscribe to the will of the law, which alone can give him a clear right of succession to the Throne.

The law is the expression of the general will, emanating from the common agreement of society, subduing the passions by enforcing reason, and protecting the rights of men by dispensing justice. Obedience to the law is the solemn pact of the community; and the subscription to its will by a Prince, forms the compact between King and people; and so long as his present Most Excellent Majesty, and his illustrious issue, maintain this union, this sacred palladium, free and inviolate,

* See the Resolutions of the Commons, 1681, to exclude James Duke of York.

† Black. Comm. Vol. I. p. 195.

they have an indisputable and unequivocal claim, and an established right to the allegiance and subjection of the people of England at this day, their heirs and posterity, for ever.

A further remark I shall make, which will illustrate in an eminent manner the stability of the Constitution, which is, that the indivisibility of the Crown, and the perpetuity of the Executive Power, preserve the component parts of the Constitution in all unprecedented casualties. If this theorem be not admitted, the Convention assembled on the abdication of James, assuming a legislative capacity, and exercising powers as independent of the people as they actually possess when elected in a regular Parliamentary manner, might have constituted themselves an Aristocracy, formed an Oligarchy, or established a Republic; and having in pay the army and navy, and in possession of the Treasury and Public Offices, the resistance of a people intimidated by Popery, and depressed by the recent civil wars, might have been checked effectually; and a tyranny substituted on Protestant faith might have reconciled sects, and systemized slavery.

But the stability of the Crown, which is the superstructure of the Constitution, by that necessary relation it bears to the foundation, which is the law, preserved the system entire, that the breath
of

of Anarchy, or the voice of Rebellion, could not reach it without annihilating the Constitution. The indivisibility of the Crown, and the perpetuity of the Executive Power, therefore naturally dictated to the Public mind the supply of the defect, without any innovation on the Constitution, or disturbing the harmony of the system. For the interest which every man possesses in the community, is the best security for the preservation of this model of Government; for every individual, by its abolition, would be deprived of whatever right he may possess under the common law, whatever privilege he may enjoy from an Act of Parliament, and whatever franchise he may be partaker of from a charter. Under these considerations, the Convention of Lords and Commons for the common good, and by the confidence reposed in them by the nation, made the statutes of the land and the principles of the Constitution the rule of their conduct, equally binding themselves as the whole community, from which deductions it is evident that the confidence of the people is the basis of a Convention or Parliament, and a free and independent Parliament the basis of freedom.

To conclude these remarks on political liberty, let it be remembered, as it stands upon record, That the people owe every thing they deem excellent and inestimable in their Constitution to the exercise of political liberty; not one law of
liberty

liberty in the whole code, from the Invasion down to the Revolution, proceeds from the voluntary effusion of a patriotic heart in the breast of a Monarch. The pride of human nature induces them to look one way, fawning courtiers another; and it is seldom the people can catch a glance. And notwithstanding, by the Constitution*, whatever is exceptionable in the conduct of public affairs, is not to be imputed to a King, nor is he answerable for it personally to his people; yet when a weak and bad man succeeds to the Throne, he must be considered as a necessary evil; but when a wise and good man ascends the Throne, his reign proves an age of triumph, of freedom, and happy Government. It is not in the power of a nation by election to choose a succession of wise and good men. In all elections it is in general found, that interest supplants merit. The order of Nature must be reversed to command virtue and wisdom in a single man, or body of men; and the chance of good men by hereditary descent is equal to that of choice, and never attended with its evils, rivalry and anarchy.

To imagine that Government does not consist of the various affections of men, is mistaking the nature of it. In every age it has proved as versatile as man, operating alternately by passion, pro-

* Black. Comm. vol. I. p. 246.

fusion, and economy; by fear, folly, and wisdom, arbitrary and free. Let the warmest Republican lay his hand on his breast, and divest his heart of predatory views, and chuse what period of the seventeen hundred years of the English history he would wish to return to; and let the strongest advocate for hereditary claims and hereditary rights divest his heart of the thirst of power, traverse the same period, and fix the data for the perfection of the Constitution: England was never more splendid by opulence, or more inexhaustible in resources, than at the present day; and the Constitution, for that very reason, never more liable to be perverted. But to the glory of Britain, the chief excellence of her constitution consists in being open to improvement. It is a solid machine whose greatest beauty is to court survey; it solicits investigation; political liberty gave it spirit and motion; and that same native power can ever maintain that which it founded.

SECTION VII.

The Rights of Englishmen; or, The British Constitution.

TO avoid a labyrinth of discussion, by ad-
 ducing codes of law, and citing a multitude
 of authors, I shall sum up these sacred Palladiums
 under a few heads.

THE ABSOLUTE GENERAL RIGHT OF
 ENGLISHMEN.

POLITICAL LIBERTY.

Which is the supreme power of the people, or
 the right of convening at all times to maintain
 and preserve the Constitution and Laws, which
 guaranty their absolute personal rights.

THE ABSOLUTE PERSONAL RIGHTS OF
 ENGLISHMEN.

1st. The right of personal security, or the legal
 uninterrupted enjoyment of life, limbs, body,
 health, and reputation.

2d. The

2d. The personal liberty of individuals, which consists in the power of loco-motion, of changing situation, or moving to whatsoever place a person's inclination may direct, without imprisonment or restraint, unless by due course of law ; as by Magna Charta “ no freeman shall be taken or imprisoned “ but by the lawful judgment of his equals or the “ law of the land.”

3d. The absolute right of property, which consists in the free use, enjoyment, and disposal of all his acquisitions, without any control or diminution save only by the law of the land, which was also confirmed by Magna Charta, which declares, “ That no freeman shall be disseized or “ divested of his freehold, or of his liberties, or “ free customs, but by the judgment of his peers “ or by the laws of the land.” And by various subsequent statutes, the property of the subject was most firmly secured. The obtaining these statutes was a legal conquest over Norman despotism. These acts declare *, That no subject of “ England shall be constrained to pay aids or “ taxes even for the defence of the realm, or the “ support of Government, but such as are im- “ posed by *his own consent, or that of his Represen- “ tatives in Parliament.*”

* Blackstone, vol. I. p. 140.

THE PECULIAR INHERITANCES OF
ENGLISHMEN;

OR,

BRITISH CIVIL LIBERTIES.

1st. The three estates, King, Lords, and Commons, each possessing distinct privileges, and each estate subordinate to the law, which guaranties the common interest of the community.

“ * The executive power of the laws being
 “ lodged in a single person, they have all the ad-
 “ vantages of strength and dispatch that are to be
 “ found in the most absolute Monarchy; and as
 “ the Legislature of the kingdom is entrusted to
 “ three distinct powers, entirely independent of
 “ each other; first, the King; secondly, the
 “ Lords Spiritual and Temporal, which is an
 “ aristocratical assembly of persons selected for
 “ their piety, their birth, their wisdom, their va-
 “ lour, or their property; and thirdly, the House
 “ of Commons, *freely chosen by the people from among*
 “ *themselves*, which makes it a kind of Demo-
 “ cracy, as this aggregate body, actuated by dif-
 “ ferent springs, and attentive to different inte-
 “ rests, composes the British Parliament, and has
 “ the supreme disposal of every thing; there can

* Blackstone, vol. I. p. 50.

“ no inconvenience be attempted by either of the
 “ three branches, but will be withstood by one
 “ of the other two, each branch being armed
 “ with a negative power sufficient to repel any
 “ innovation which it shall think inexpedient or
 “ dangerous.”

2d. Freedom of Mind on Religion. Every individual may worship God as the pure sincerity of his heart dictates, without any civil or religious restraint whatever.

3d. The civil courts of justice, wherein, agreeable to the language of Magna Charta, Justice shall not be bought or sold, but right be done to every individual without distinction.

4th. Freedom of Election, and a New Representation every Three Years. N. B. The Septennial Act and the partial representation of boroughs, are violent usurpations on political liberty, and must be reformed.

5th. The Liberty of the Press.

6th. Trial by a Jury of Twelve Men, who are to give a general verdict on the matter of law as well as of fact.

7th. The Habeas Corpus Act.

These

These invaluable privileges were created or confirmed by independent patriotic Conventions, and can never be surrendered or lost but by corrupt Parliaments. From the wisdom of seventeen hundred years has resulted these several sacred institutions, which being founded on true equity, reason and the laws of God, comprise and form those certain fixed principles of Government, by which a community may attain the certain enjoyment of liberty, order, and prosperity; and no delegated power, even the nation itself, cannot abrogate them without committing a criminal act, by which true equity and reason would be sacrificed, and the laws of God be violated; for every nation in the world, in the full and free possession of these several institutions, must enjoy the highest possible degree of human liberty. It is these which compose the Englishman's freehold, of which the King and Peers are the trustees, and the Commons are tenants at will; to admit they have the power to alienate or waste is no defeasance of the nation's right of inheritance; the mind of man is above the reach of law; and it does not follow that power cannot be abused. We may as well affirm, that men having the plain precepts of Scripture to refer to, shall invariably act virtuously; but practice will constantly be at variance with theory, as the profession of morality in the gross by any power is dashed with the leaven of knavery.

The unremitting duty of Englishmen is therefore to be vigilant, and with a patriotic eye watch every motion of Government. If these sacred institutions should be attempted to be perverted, a faithful spirited remonstrance should be laid before the Legislature. If they should be actually violated, and this remonstrance disregarded, the people must have resort to political liberty.

The mutability and fallibility of man render, by a natural consequence, all human actions imperfect, whether in an individual person or body corporate, from which we may infer, that though it be possible the principles of a Constitution may be perfect, the administration of them may not. The Three Estates, the civil courts, and the various institutions, form a Constitution, which, figuratively speaking, may be termed an adamantine edifice, which through ages will continue the same, but in every age it will be inhabited by men various in disposition and ability, and versatile by the fashion of the times ; yet every succeeding age will be at no loss to find the great outlines, the pillars and bulwarks of the mansion. And if a preceding age has ventured on useless or pernicious alterations, a succeeding age has a complete and full power to restore it to its primitive state. The abuse in the national representation comes under this description ; but as virtue and vice seem to keep an equal pace, and wisdom is partial in her favours,

we cannot reckon on a greater harvest of integrity or abilities than what a former age has enjoyed; and we may truly repeat, it is possible a Constitution may be perfect, though the administration of it be not; consequently the Government, which is the operative power of the Constitution, will ever be short of perfection, unless an administration shall fortunately be so formed, that every member of it shall have united in his person both integrity and wisdom. But it is the common misfortune of Administrations to consist of men who possess wisdom, but are deficient in patriotic integrity. Hence a Constitution founded on political liberty, often discovers in its operative powers the principles of an arbitrary Government. The public mind cannot be too fully impressed with this truth, which teaches men the extreme danger of imbibing from florid harangues on the perfection of the Constitution a passive moderation, and a total inattention to the motions of Government. Thank God, a majority of the nation is not in this dream, fatal would it otherwise be, for the time would arrive when the people would awaken fettered with the chains of arbitrary power. Disinterested men, whose principles are proof against the immoderate thirst of place and power, whose integrity regulates their ambition, will ever look with a jealous eye to the motions of Government; impressed with the native principle of political liberty, they will ever conduct themselves in a cool

intrepid manner ; their exertions will ever be constitutional, and carry a weight and importance very different from the spurious abortive spirit of faction, which, from the nature of its predatory principles, the energy of the Executive Power of the Constitution will ever suppress. But the true spirit of liberty will be heard ; the people must renounce their birth-rights ere the Constitution can suffer, or the laws be materially violated.

The Republicans who affirm that we have no Constitution, in order to accomplish their predatory principles, may in this brief Section see their refutation. These adventurers bear a malicious envy to this island, which, from the eulogies bestowed on it by ancient and modern writers, we find is represented as the “ Granary of the Western World, the seat of Ceres ; that its vallies
 “ are like Eden ; its hills like Lebanon ; its
 “ springs as Pisgah, and its rivers like Jordan ;
 “ that it is a paradise of pleasure, and the garden
 “ of God.”

SECTION VIII.

Remarks on the present State of the Elective Power of the People, and the Constitution of Parliament.

The distempers of monarchy were the great subjects of apprehension and redress in the last century; in this the distempers of parliament.

BURKE.

IN an inquiry into the present state of the representation of the people, decency cannot be sacrificed at the shrine of truth, if it shall appear that the interests of a whole community have demanded a free discussion; and candour will admit what impartiality naturally induces—a distinction between the mode by which the popular representation is constituted, and the qualifications and abilities of the present members.

When the love of pleasure and dissipation is diffusing itself in an unprecedented manner through all ranks of people; and the religion of the established church is too evidently losing its sanctity and force on the minds of the great; men, whose passions are not seduced by a musical age, and whose judgments are not biased by the refinement of the arts, will regard the rise and fall of nations; they

will find that luxury gratifies the passions at the expence of acknowledged principles; and knowing the mutability of the very best governments, with becoming zeal and resolution, will exert their most spirited endeavours to secure the Freedom of Election and the Independence of Parliament, which are confessedly the bulwarks of their own. In fine, the people have been repeatedly told they have no other security for their freedom. It was a known apothegm of the great Lord Treasury Burleigh, * That England could never be ruined but by a parliament. And when we are told by a great modern statesman, “ that the distempers of monarchy were “ the great subjects of redress and apprehension in “ the last century, but in this the distempers of “ parliament;” is it not sufficient to alarm every man? Is it not enough to rouse the nation, to find these distempers still suppurating. Without meaning to impute a shadow of apostacy to Mr. Burke, when he tells us, “ † It has been the “ misfortune and not the glory of this age that “ every thing must be discussed,” we are drawn into a painful confession, that the Genius of Liberty has suffered an outrage, by one of her veteran advocates suffering his gilded day of honours to be eclipsed by the cloud of corruption, and leaving

* Blackstone, vol. i. p. 161.—Sir Matthew Hale on Parliaments, p. 49.—Montesquieu, Sp. L. 11—6.

† Reflections on the Revolution of France, p. 16.

the most important subject that ever impressed on his heart, or agitated his mind, to a precarious dependance on chance, or the more doubtful security of secret and corrupt influence. In an exertion of his superior abilities, a reform in parliament is of all subjects that alone which could add additional splendour to his talents, honour to his principles, or dignity to his name.

When we take a retrospect of administrations, to go no further back than the commencement of this reign, and reflect on the clamour and general discontent excited by the secret and corrupt influence of the *Butean* system, during the administration of a Grafton and a North. And when we now find an universal revival of this spirit of discontent, we must be convinced ALL IS NOT WELL. And the reason of every man must direct him to the violation of the freedom of election as the true source of grievance. The abuse of the representation of the people has been and is the sole cause of all public discontents. And because it has not yet been remedied, the administrations of this reign have incurred the contempt of all wise men, the indignation of all honest men, and the general execration of the great majority of people.

The art of governing a free people is the preservation of that great chain in the order of society, which links, by mutual attraction and dependance,

the whole community. The balance of power and property, in the scale of equal justice and common right, is the great interested object of the people, and the business of government. The true balance of property is the necessary equilibrium in the Constitution, and the *status quo* of society: a brief investigation of this main spring in every free state, will enable us to decide more clearly the justice or injustice of our representation.

For the origin of property no certain æra can be fixed. The necessaries of life are the cultured or manufactured products of land. Various conjectures may be adduced to shew how and by what means particular men became possessed of landed property. Beyond a doubt, time out of mind and record, mankind have been divided into two sorts of inhabitants, the landholders and the labourers; and from the vicissitudes of human possessions, and the various fortunes of men, the labourers must necessarily form the multitude, and be dependant on the landholders, who are the few; and among these few there must exist relative connexions and dependancies, proportionate to their greater or less influence over the many. To balance these connexions and subordinations in a community, which are founded in nature, is the first operative principle of government. The balance of property has an intimate connexion with the local situation and nature of a country; it is not artificial,

cial, but natural; not speculative, but real. Hence the Utopian hypotheses of all levellers, from Phaleas of Chalcedon, from Sir Thomas More to Thomas Paine, being founded on the erroneous ground of considering the balance of property artificial; of owing its existence to a legislative power, and not arising from the constituted order of nature, have proved abortive. The balance of property having its foundation in nature, all subordinations among mankind have one mutual connexion, and are linked together in one great chain. The landholder cannot exist without the labourer, no more than the poor without the rich. Every man depends on his particular friends, connexions, or his servants, for every thing he may be said to enjoy. And this mutual dependance is a clear, self-evident proof that the Great Author of Nature views mankind with an equal eye; by his immutable laws we owe our daily bread to each other. And this actual state of mutual benefits should strongly excite gratitude and submission from the governed to the governors. And on the other hand, it should be the daily study of governors to imitate the Great Author of Nature in his rich benevolence, and in charity, promote and dispense the blessings of liberty, right, and justice.

The conclusion from this reasoning shews the science of true government to consist in proportioning all the parts of this great chain of connexions

nexions and subordinations, that no one part should so interfere with another as to produce anarchy or oppression. And from these remarks it follows, that according to the mutual dependance and reciprocity of action in the constituent parts of our Constitution, the House of Commons, composed of the representatives of the people, should be the representatives of the labourers against the landholders, or in other words, the poor and the commercial part against the rich and powerful, to constitute the balance of property in the scale of power. Here the argument bottoms. This is the basis on which the Constitution is erected. And this principle is general and universal in the state. And every government operating on this first and natural ground of those connexions and subordinations, which form the great chain of society, is a government of truth, of equal justice, and of equal right.

Upon this principle we shall be able to examine truly the different acts passed at the Revolution, and those enacted since, for the freedom of election and the constitution of parliament. Of the ancient manner of holding parliaments, we find it to be the letter and spirit of the Constitution, that they should be held once a year, or oftener if need were ; which is the same as they are held at this day. But the great question for the present age to decide, and which precedents of antiquity can have no
 avail,

avail, is, whether a new House of Commons shall be elected every year, every three years, or every seven years? Or, whether, by the monopoly of boroughs, members shall continue to sit during their lives.

In this review of the statutes we shall first notice those relative to the freedom of election, in the order of succession from the Revolution, and next, those which relate to the duration of a House of Commons.

By the Bill of Rights, 1st Will. and Mary, it is declared in the 7th charge against James II. that he endeavoured the subversion of the Constitution, by violating the freedom of election. And it is further recited, in vindicating and asserting their ancient rights and liberties, that they do claim and demand, and insist upon all and singular the premises as declared to be the undoubted right of the people, the 8th of which was, that the election of members of parliament OUGHT TO BE FREE.

This indefinite and equivocal clause, *that elections ought to be free*, argues either a compromise on the part of the partial representation of insignificant boroughs, or an interested regard to property. But it is more rational to conclude the revolutionists had no other views than to establish their religious liberties on true protestant principles, and to limit the
the

the excessive prerogatives of the crown; they never entertained an idea of establishing an equal and general representation; and the Revolution in this respect was left as incomplete as those whose heads ran high with intemperate ambition could wish. And this want of foresight or neglect was no doubt occasioned by the terrors of anarchy. Their minds were too much impressed with the recent civil wars, and the disorders of the Commonwealth, to venture an extension of democratic power. They were content * to keep measures with prejudice, which they deemed necessary to the order and preservation of their recovered Constitution.

This conclusion the subsequent statutes of 7th and 8th Will. and Mary proves, which recites, “ That † whereas grievous complaints are made of
 “ violating the freedom of election, to the great
 “ scandal of the kingdom; *dishonourable, and may*
 “ *be destructive* to the constitution of parliament;”

* Mackintosh's *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, p. 298.

† 1695, a severe bill was brought in for voiding all elections of parliament-men, where the elected had been at any expence in meat, drink, or money, to procure votes. It was very strictly penned; but time must shew whether any inventions can be found out to avoid it; certainly, if it has the desired effect, it would prove one of the best laws that ever was made in England; for abuses in elections were grown to a most intolerable excess, which threatened even the ruin of the nation.

Burnet's History of his own Time, vol. IV. p. 309.

for remedy whereof it enacts, that members, giving bribes of money or entertainments, shall be incapacitated to sit and serve in Parliament.

The positive tenor of this act fully proves the laws at that period; established for the freedom of election were not sufficiently coercive to preserve the balance of property necessary to the free operation of the Constitution. The weight of the aristocratic power over-balanced the democratic; and the representatives of the people have since acted as principals, spurned the relation which they bore as agents or deputies from a state originally organized upon delegated power; and by various subsequent measures have disposed of the elective rights of the people in such a manner, as even to have made their constituents the instruments of their prostituted authority; or, in the words of Mr. Burke, “ * The notorious infidelity and ver-
 “ fatility of members of parliament in their opi-
 “ nion of men and things, by an indiscriminate
 “ support of all administrations, have totally ba-
 “ nished all integrity and confidence out of pub-
 “ lic proceedings, have confounded the best men
 “ with the worst, and weakened and dissolved, in-
 “ stead of strengthening and compacting, the ge-
 “ neral order of government.”

* Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents.

The heterogeneous idea of different interests in a community as a body, has introduced practices the most pernicious to the one common interest of the whole. This common interest is the soul and spirit of the Constitution, and which can only be rendered general and effective by the concurrence of all the constituent powers, in their several subordinations, to this principle. But when any one man or party, delegated with those powers, considers himself or themselves allied to the community by a separate interest, and the narrowness of their capacities, or the sordidness of their souls, influences them to a mercenary conduct of making their own fortunes, or, by patronage, those of their friends, the order of society is violated, and the great chain of common interest becomes daily weakened by the corrosions of secret corruptions and party interests. Hence have arisen the mischievous distinctions of a Court and a Country Party, of Whig and Tory, of Ministerialists and Antiministerialists; which are the consequences of private interests opposing the real common interest of the people, and have their only true foundation in the abuse of the balance of property in the House of Commons, through the monopoly of boroughs by the nobility and hereditary members of parliament. I trust I shall prove no argument under the face of heaven can support such an unwarrantable usurpation of political liberty, and gross abuse of the rights of the people.

The penalty of the last recited act merely goes to disqualify the candidate so offending; no punishment or penalty being inflicted on the electors taking such bribes. The remedy intended by this statute was therefore to remind the candidate of his patriotism and his honour. But honour, though a sacred tie, and the law of kings, was found to wear away in the minds of some members; for a majority were obliged to impose another tie on their honour, with a penalty on their reputation and property, by 2 Geo. c. 24. which recites, that “Whereas it is found by experience that the laws already in being, have not been sufficient to prevent corrupt and illegal practices in the election of members of parliament.” For remedy therefore of *so great an evil*, it enacts, that electors shall, if demanded, take an oath that they have not been bribed: and it is further enacted, “That if any elector shall take money, &c. as a bribe, or shall agree or contract for any money, &c. to give, or forbear to give, his vote; or if any person by himself, or any person employed by him, doth, or shall, by any gift or reward, or by any promise, &c. corrupt or procure any person or persons to give his vote at any such election, shall for every offence forfeit 500l. to be recovered as the law directs, with full costs of suit: and any person offending in any of the cases aforesaid, after judgment obtained, shall for ever be disabled to hold, exercise or enjoy any office or franchise

“ franchise to which he and they then shall, or at
 “ any time afterwards may be entituled; as a mem-
 “ ber of any city, borough-town corporate, or
 “ cinque port, as if such person was naturally
 “ *dead.*”

In this statute the electors are made equally liable to penalties with the candidates, and the disabilities seem effectual and conclusive. But such is the mutability of human nature, and such the deficiency of human wisdom, that no statute can be virtuously framed but vice will overleap. And this last recited act being the last statute for preventing this evil, moral obligations are hereby found to be ineffectual in binding men in their public capacities, although they would blush to be so detected in their private affairs.

Next we examine the statutes passed at and since the Revolution, relative to the holding of parliaments; the first of which is included in the Bill of Rights, 1 Will. and Mary, c. 2. by which it is declared to be one of the rights of the people, that there should be *frequent* parliaments.

This indefinite clause *frequent* comports with the clause before stated in the Bill of Rights, which says, “ That the election of members of parliament
 “ *ought* to be free.” And these are very evident and conclusive circumstances to prove, *That the
 democratic*

democratic weight necessary in the Three Estates was left by the necessity of the times, at the Revolution, unequal and deficient, and which paved the way for all the abuses and grievances which have since arisen.

To controvert this affirmation, the subsequent Act of the 6th William and Mary, c. 2. will be opposed, which recites, That *frequent and new* Parliaments tend very much to the happy union and good agreement of the King and people; it therefore enacts and declares, That Parliaments shall be held once in three years at least, and shall have no longer continuance than three years at farthest.

But this Statute, however conclusive in itself, was but a mere plaister covering a gangrene; for the freedom of election was left open to every malversation of placemen and pensioners, and to the corrupt bribes of the Aristocracy; and by the Septennial Act this gangrene turned to an actual mortification. The body was consumed, and we have now nothing remaining but the skeleton of political freedom. This Act of 1 Geo. I. c. 38. recites, “ That by an Act of 6th William and Mary, the continuance of Parliaments was limited to three years, and declares grievous heats, animosities, and expences, had been incurred by that Act.”

These consequences followed from the representation being partial, unequal, and monopolized.

Had an equal and general representation been established, wherein the lower orders made choice of Deputies, and those Deputies the immediate Representatives, these maladies would have been eradicated, and the Crown equally secured. Instead of which the Parliament assumed a power which the Members, by virtue of their delegated capacity, could not assume, without handing down to posterity this dangerous precedent, “ *That a number of self-interested men, calling themselves the representatives of the people, and constituting themselves a Parliament, by being proprietors or patrons of boroughs, and by the secret and corrupt influence of the Executive Power, and other daring violations of the freedom of Britain, may pass an Act for their own legislative existence for life, or for a century, and the Constitution, by such subversive measures, may degenerate into despotism by an Act of Parliament, and the People of England become slaves by Law.*”

This Statute further enacts; “ That the provision in the former Act may probably at this juncture, when a RESTLESS and POPISH faction are designing and endeavouring to renew the rebellion within this kingdom, be destructive to Government, Be it enacted therefore, That Parliaments shall have continuance for the space of seven years.”

The necessity for adopting such a measure is not convincing and satisfactory; and though it may be justified

justified on the ground of having a presumptive tendency of better securing the present glorious family on the Throne, nevertheless it proved an invasion on the Constitution, and promoted State jobbing, which has since arisen to an actual trade among the higher ranks; and further, it has been the immediate cause of most of the public grievances and inglorious wars which have occurred since that period. There cannot remain a doubt but Triennial Parliaments would have equally secured the Crown and Constitution. But prerogative, corrupted by Aristocracy, ever vigilant, saw the opportunity to grasp, and patriotism, intimidated by a threatened civil war, yielded a willing prey.

The speech of a patriotic worthy Member, in opposition to this bill, is deserving of notice. He observed *, “ That the right of electing representatives in Parliament was inseparably inherent in the people of Great Britain, and could never be thought to be delegated to the representatives, unless they made the elected the elector, and at the same time supposed it the will of the people, that their representatives should have it in their power to destroy those who made them, whenever a Ministry should think it necessary to screen themselves from their just resentment; that this would be to destroy the force of all their freedom; for if they had a right to conti-

* See Debates in Parliament, 1715.

“ nue themselves one year, one month, or one day,
 “ beyond their triennial term, it will unavoidably
 “ follow, that they have it in their power to make
 “ themselves perpetual. He further observed, That
 “ to say the passing of this Bill was not to grasp
 “ to themselves the right of election, but only
 “ to enlarge the time of calling new Parliaments,
 “ was a manifest fallacy ; for whenever the three
 “ years were expired, they could no longer be said
 “ to subsist by *the choice of the people*, but by their
 “ own appointment. For these reasons he thought
 “ the bill *an open violation* of the people’s liberties ;
 “ or, to speak most mildly of it, a breach of the
 “ members’ trust in that part which would most
 “ sensibly affect them, and of that ill tendency in
 “ its consequences, that as nothing but the security
 “ of the Ministry could make it at that time need-
 “ ful, SO NOTHING BUT A STANDING FORCE
 “ COULD MAKE IT LASTING.”

Thirty Peers entered their protests against this Bill, affirming that new Parliaments are required by the fundamental laws of the Constitution ; and that the Bill, so far from preventing expences and corruptions, that it would rather tend to increase them, as the LONGER a Parliament is to last the MORE VALUABLE a station in it must become, and the greater will be the danger of corrupting its members ; notwithstanding which the Bill passed, though in addition to the opposition it met in Parliament, petitions were presented to the House from
different

different parts of the kingdom, wherein the people declare they looked upon it as an attempt to overturn the Constitution.

The family of the Pretender being now extinct, and the present illustrious House of Brunswick reigning triumphant in the hearts and minds of the people, this Act should be repealed, as an intolerable grievance, from which arise the following questions :—Has not the value of boroughs been so much enhanced since this Statute was passed, as to render the monopoly of them a matter of infinite importance to families looking up to the Crown for promotion? Have not the rights of election in consequence been transferred from the constituents to the representatives, who are nominated and returned in some boroughs without making their appearance, and the inhabitants and electors are as ignorant of their persons and qualifications as the people of New Holland? Where then exists the popular branch of the Legislature? If men can, independent of the suffrages of the people, secure to themselves a seat in Parliament during their lives, what security have the people for their liberties? as by such an illegal measure men have the power of establishing laws, and imposing partial taxes, which may principally affect the people and not themselves.

The inference from these questions is this, that the present Constitution of Parliament is tantamount

mount to an hereditary Legislature, which is the greatest of all possible evils. Is this a speculative assertion, or is it a fact? What can so incontrovertibly establish its being matter of fact as this question? Are not boroughs as naturally bequeathed to the heir as the very estate itself, and descend from wise men to fools, and from ideots to knaves, who are all indiscriminately entrusted with the freedom of Britain, the dearest inheritance and birth-right of every Englishman?

These are truths so well known, that to have reference to matter of proof would be to insult the understanding of the meanest Commoner in England.

The first motion made to repeal the Septennial Act *, it is worthy of remark, was negatived by a majority in which were 113 placemen and other officers under the Crown. And every motion of repeal and reform since that period has been negatived by the same influence of the Crown. The country Gentlemen, the staunch friends of freedom, and the only supporters of constitutional liberty, were unanimous for its repeal. Part of the speeches of two of whom I shall recite.

The first worthy Member remarked, “Bribery at elections, whence did it arise? Not from country Gentlemen, for they are sure of being chosen with-

* See Debates in Parliament, 1734.

“ out it. It was, Sir, the invention of wicked and
 “ corrupt Ministers, who have from time to time
 “ led weak Princes into such destructive measures,
 “ that they did not dare to rely upon the represen-
 “ tation of the people. Long Parliaments, Sir,
 “ first introduced bribery, because they were worth
 “ purchasing at any rate. Country Gentlemen,
 “ who have only their private fortunes to rely on,
 “ and have no mercenary ends to serve, are unable
 “ to oppose, especially if at any time the public
 “ treasure shall be unfaithfully squandered away to
 “ corrupt their boroughs. Country Gentlemen,
 “ indeed, may make some weak efforts; but
 “ as they generally prove unsuccessful, and the
 “ time of a great struggle is at so great a distance,
 “ they at last grow faint in the dispute, give up
 “ their country for lost, and retire in despair. De-
 “ spair naturally produces indolence, and that is the
 “ proper disposition for slavery. Ministers of State
 “ understand this very well, and are therefore un-
 “ willing to awake the nation out of its lethargy
 “ by frequent elections. They know that the spi-
 “ rit of liberty, like every other virtue of the
 “ mind, is to be kept alive only by constant ac-
 “ tion; that it is impossible to enslave this country
 “ while it is perpetually on its guard. Let coun-
 “ try Gentlemen then, by having frequent oppor-
 “ tunities of exerting themselves, be kept active
 “ and warm in their contention for the public
 “ good. This will raise that zeal and indignation

“ which will at last get the better of those undue
 “ influences by which the officers of the Crown,
 “ though unknown to the several boroughs, have
 “ been able to supplant country Gentlemen of great
 “ character and fortunes, who live in their neigh-
 “ bourhood. I do not say this upon idle specula-
 “ tion only ; I live in a county * where it is too well
 “ known, and I will appeal to many Gentlemen
 “ in this House, to more out of it, and who are
 “ so for this very reason, for the truth of my asser-
 “ tion. Sir, it is a sore that has long been eating
 “ into the most vital part of our Constitution ; and
 “ I hope the time will come when you will probe
 “ it to the bottom ; for if a Minister should gain
 “ a corrupt familiarity with our boroughs ; if he
 “ should keep a register of this in his closet, and,
 “ by sending down his Treasury mandates, should
 “ procure a spurious representation of the people,
 “ the offspring of his corruption, who will be at
 “ all times ready to reconcile and justify the most
 “ contradictory measures of his administration,
 “ and even to vote every crude indigested dream
 “ of their Patron into a law ; if the maintenance of
 “ his power should become the sole object of his
 “ attention, and they should be guilty of the most
 “ violent breach of Parliamentary trust, by giving
 “ the King a discretionary liberty of taxing the
 “ people without limitation or control, the last fa-
 “ tal compliment they can pay to the Crown ; if
 “ this should ever be the unhappy circumstance of

* Cornwall.

“ this nation, the people may indeed complain ;
 “ but the door of that place where their complaints
 “ should be heard will for ever be shut against
 “ them.”

The other country Gentleman, equally distinguished for his independence and patriotism, observed, “ The learned Gentleman (the Attorney-
 “ General) has told us that our Constitution has
 “ been often varied, and that there was no time
 “ when it was such as we ought or would desire
 “ to return to. Sir, it is not to be doubted
 “ but our Constitution has often varied, and per-
 “ haps there is no time when it was without a
 “ fault ; but I will affirm that there is no time
 “ in which we may not find some good things in
 “ our Constitution. There are now, there have
 “ been in every century, some good laws existing.
 “ Let us preserve those that are good ; if any of
 “ them have been abolished, let them be restored ;
 “ and if any of the laws now in being are found to
 “ be attended with inconveniencies, let them be
 “ repealed. This is what is now desired, this is
 “ what the people have reason to expect from Par-
 “ liament ; there is nothing now desired but what
 “ the people have a right to, frequent new Par-
 “ liaments ; and the right was established and con-
 “ firmed even by the claim of rights, notwith-
 “ standing what the learned Gentleman has said to
 “ the contrary,”

And

And further he subjoined—"Now, Sir, to
 " return to the power of the Crown, which the
 " learned Gentleman has told us was too much
 " limited by the Triennial Law. I think I have
 " made it plain that the just power of the Crown
 " cannot possibly be limited by frequent elections,
 " and consequently could not be too much limited
 " by the Triennial Law; but by long Parliaments
 " the Crown may be enabled to assume, and to
 " make use of an unjust power. By our Consti-
 " tution the only legal method we have of vindic-
 " ating our rights and privileges against the en-
 " croachments of ambitious Ministers is by Par-
 " liament; the only way we have of rectifying a
 " weak and wicked Administration is by Parlia-
 " ment; the only effectual way we have of bringing
 " high and powerful criminals to condign punish-
 " ment is by Parliament. But if ever it should
 " come to be in the power of the Administration
 " to have a majority of this House depending
 " upon the Crown, or to get a majority of such
 " men returned as the representatives of the people,
 " the Parliament will then stand as in no stead, it
 " can answer none of these great purposes. The
 " whole nation may be convinced of the weakness
 " or wickedness of those in the Administration,
 " and yet it may be out of the nation's power, in
 " a legal way, to get the fools turned out or the
 " knaves hanged."

It would be superfluous to adduce the arguments advanced on the ministerial side of the question, as not one objection of weight was alleged, or one rational argument advanced, otherwise than the vague apprehension of Jacobitism.

These two speeches serve to shew the general sense entertained of this pernicious Septennial Act at the distant period of near threescore years, and whether the evils here deduced were or were not fully operating, is not a matter to engage our enquiry; suffice for the present age to know that grievances had increased, that corruption was increasing, and that the cup of evil has now overflowed and spread over the land the *lava* of accumulated taxes. And when we consider how Paymasters, Commissaries, Agents, and other servants of the Crown, have been rewarded, we must conclude they have rendered to Government an eternal obligation, and that these taxes are to support

“ The debt immense of endless gratitude;”

“ So burthensome, still paying, still to owe.”

Among the many illicit practices attending the abuse in the representation, there is one of a very specious complexion, as having a pretence to support a sacred tie which every true Englishman bears in his heart—*a friendship for his King*. Under the pretext of being the King's friends, Members received

ceived a *douceur* for the usufruct of their voices, creating thereby a distinction in the representation of the people, and destroying the confidential relation which ought to subsist in its utmost purity between the King and his faithful people; for a King to raise bulwarks, battlements, and castles against his people is a most heterogeneous idea, and a mistaken policy in a free Government. A great and good King of a free people can have no enemies within his dominions but those of his own courtiers.

We owe this secret and corrupt policy to the genius of Charles II. and it may fairly be said to be practising Machiavel's maxim in ambush—*Divide et impera*—Divide the people and subdue them. Interest will attach a majority, who are taught by the influence of this maxim, that there is a tide continually flowing to Court, where those get soonest there who smoothly glide on the current of corruption. What shark but will go with the stream?

Further, the continuance of Parliaments for seven years rendered it an object of some importance to the private interest of a Member; for if his election cost him at most 1500*l.* and he was receiving for the usufruct of his voice the least prostituted sum, 500*l. per annum*, he would gain 2000*l.* at the expiration of the seven years he sat in
Parliament,

Parliament, besides the privileges of being free from arrests and the benefit of franks; and to obtain a qualification for this little *estate and sinecure*, the following practice has been adopted by the needy: to borrow deeds of noble Lords and Commoners strongly interested in the different existing Administrations, have them conveyed to themselves on the security of bonds, &c. then make oath of having a *clear estate*, to the amount of the specific qualification; and after taking their seat re-convey the same to their patrons, and then side on every question, and vote in every measure with the mercenary troop. This circumstance, and the monopoly of boroughs by noble Lords and Commoners, their contracts to return such Members whose principles they are certain of, their rejecting others whose integrity may be hostile, their nominating and returning candidates independent of their constituents, are notorious facts, the most daring violations of the freedom of election, and gross contempts of the law, as well as inglorious sacrifices of British liberty.

That these may not appear unqualified conclusions, I shall produce the authority of a great and wise man, not less distinguished for his lucid and solid reasoning, than that his deep researches were ever formed for the elucidation of truth. Mr. Locke tells us on this subject, “ * If the Execu-

* On Gov. p. 2—222.

“ tive Power employs the force, treasure, and of-
 “ fices of the Society to corrupt the representatives,
 “ or openly pre-engages the electors, and pre-
 “ scribes to their choice what manner of persons
 “ shall be chosen; thus to regulate candidates
 “ and electors, and new model the way of elec-
 “ tion, what is it but to cut up the Government
 “ by the roots, and poison the very fountain of
 “ public security? For the people having reserved
 “ to themselves the choice of their representatives,
 “ as a fence of their properties, could do it for
 “ no other end but that they might always be
 “ freely chosen, and so chose, freely act and ad-
 “ vise.”

These baneful and ruinous practices were nur-
 tured by the Septennial Act, and cherished by
 that Prince of political corruption, Sir Robert
 Walpole, under whose tutelage they grew and
 spread, and during the American war had per-
 vaded every secretion of the State. Lord Chester-
 field, in his character of Sir Robert, says—“ That
 “ he brought to perfection that shameful method
 “ of governing by secret and corrupt influence,
 “ which at this time both dishonours and disgraces
 “ this country, and which if not checked, and
 “ God knows how it can now be checked, must
 “ ruin it.”

SECTION IX.

General Propositions for accomplishing an Equal Representation of the Commons of Great Britain in the High Court of Parliament.

IN laying down a constitutional rule of action to accomplish this grand essential point, I anticipate the favourable construction of every sincere impartial friend to the Constitution. But observation induces me to except against all its enemies, which are those who are for reforming every thing, and those who are inimical to every idea of reform, against every clergyman who cannot, with that worthy prelate the Bishop of Llandaff, lay his hand on his breast, and say with him, My religion and my politics reside in my heart; and also against the gentlemen of the law, and those under the influence of Government, who cannot join with the venerable Lord Camden in this rule of conduct, Let the letter of constitutional law prevail, and right be done, though pursuing the spirit of perversion be the road to favour and fortune.

Upon the subject of this Section, John Bull, who had paid me a polite attention since our last discourse, commenced the following dialogue.

John

John Bull. You have fully convinced me of a grand evil that is pervading the vitals of the Constitution; but to remedy which, however desirous and seriously necessary, is not to be attempted but in a manner suitable to the dignity of the first kingdom in Europe, and in a way becoming a great and enlightened nation.

The Author. Impressed with such noble sentiments, there can be little doubt but the nation could accomplish this essential renovation of the Constitution without disturbing the harmony of the system, or encroaching upon the acknowledged prerogatives and privileges of either of the Three Estates. The stable support of the Crown and Parliament is the united interests of the community; and the King's prerogative is best maintained by the affections of his faithful people. There can be no hazard in his Majesty's trusting to the staunch loyalty of his subjects, by constituting a free and equal representation; and his Majesty would arise to the true summit of glory, to that pinnacle of immortal honour, which no Monarch since the great Alfred ever attained, if his Majesty, by virtue of his Royal prerogative, would dissolve the present Parliament, expressing at the same time his sense of their loyal attachment to his person and family, his assurance of their firm support of the constitution and the universal opinion of their conspicuous talents

lents and splendid abilities ; but that in his wisdom he had thought proper to increase the dignity of his Crown, the glory of his reign, and the common interest of the kingdom, by cementing on a permanent basis the sacred relation which in all purity and confidence should inviolably exist between himself and his faithful people. To render efficient this happy compact, to conciliate *all disaffection*, and to preserve the letter and spirit of the Constitution by rooting out corruption, it was his royal will and pleasure, and the anxious desire of his faithful subjects, that before he issued writs for a new Parliament, the Members of the late House of Commons, which now stands dissolved, should retire to their respective counties, and he would immediately, by virtue of his prerogative, issue mandates to the Sheriffs of the several counties, commanding the Mayor, Bailiffs, and Officers of every city, town, and village in the kingdom, to make returns of deputies from the inhabitants, chosen in the proportion of one deputy to every ten householders paying scot and lot. The deputies so returned to the Sheriff should by him be summoned to the county town, and there elect ten representatives ; and every county having in good peace and order returned ten representatives, the representatives of the nation should meet collectively in the House of Commons, where, on taking their seats, an oath should be administered to every individual, binding them to pursue only those ob-

jects particularized in the oath, for which they were convened, which is for the sole and express purpose of organizing the elective power of the people, so that a free and independent representation may be formed, agreeable to the texture and genius of our happy Constitution, and that a Parliament might be constituted, on the sacred principles of liberty, virtue, and justice; the laws of God, the rules of right conduct for man.

The national Convention thus legally convened, should be limited to sit no longer than forty days, which should be part of their oath; and having established the representation of the people on a universal, liberal, and equal mode, should submit the mode, and the future duration of a Parliament to the House of Lords, which should be summoned for the purpose; and after their concurrence, it should receive his Majesty's royal sanction, and his Majesty should immediately, at the expiration of the forty days, which would dissolve the Convention, in the usual way issue his writs for electing Knights, Citizens, and Burgeffes; and the Parliament so constituted would to all intents and purposes enjoy the same privileges, and be subject to all the statute laws relative to the same, as if no such Convention had ever met, by which not an iota of the privileges of the Three Estates of the Constitution would be affected, but, on the contrary, its true spirit be realized.

John Bull. The measure which you have proposed meets my full approbation, but such a procedure would be unprecedented. Should not a reform originate with Parliament?

The Author. With regard to precedent, * it is a maxim of our Constitution, that the prerogative is that law in case of the King which is law in no case of the subject. The King only, by the Constitution, can convoke a Parliament or dissolve one. If at the Revolution the King could, by virtue of his prerogative, constitute the Convention into a Parliament, and that Convention assembled primarily to preserve the Constitution, on a parity of reasoning, his Majesty can assemble a Convention for the self-same purpose; for his prerogative † consists in a discretionary power of acting for the public good, where the positive laws are silent. What disinterested man in the nation would oppose his Majesty in establishing the freedom of election on a permanent basis? What man would deem the exercise of the prerogative for the immediate benefit of the people, ‡ for which it was created, a violation of the regal power, or an infringement on the privileges of Parliament?

* Finch, l. 85.

† Locke on Govern. p. 2—166.

‡ Plowden, p. 487.

John Bull. Permit me to remind you of some general maxims. Kings, it is said, are seldom inclined to compassionate their subjects, because they never intend to become men; and the nobility are apt to despise the lower class of people, because they never intend to become plebeians; and the rich are in general arrogant and self-interested; I am inclined therefore, from these reflections to despair of ever witnessing this salutary renovation of the Constitution originating from Court.

The Author. Indeed, John Bull, there is something profound in your remarks. Upon maturer thoughts, I am myself in doubt, when I consider the strong barrier of self-interest which surrounds the Court, and stands in the way between the Crown and reform.

John Bull. I confess I was surpris'd you should think that it would originate from any other quarter than Parliament, which is the door at which the people at all times should have access, to make their complaints known, and have their grievances redress'd.

The Author. I presumed it was well known throughout the kingdom, that so far as respects the subject matter, the door you speak of was double barred and treble locked, and private interest kept the keys.

John

John Bull. It is unusual for me to relinquish an established opinion on slight grounds; you must apply sufficient evidence to enforce conviction.

The Author. All borough proprietors, great law officers, and members looking up for preferment, besides placemen, pensioners, and most of the officers of the army, will oppose this reform for an equal representation, which is the birth-right and inheritance of the people. Upon the question you would find Gentlemen of the above description maintain a great majority against it.

John Bull. Such a phalanx of interested troops opposed to the rights of the nation, confounds legal propriety, and renders hope desperate, I am convinced; but you have left me no resort, which is a matter of much concern to my interests.

The Author. That a general reform in Parliament will originate with the higher orders in the State, I have my doubts. I am afraid it is too palpable it never will; the *lex necessitas* will therefore eventually devolve on the people, and their authority will be founded on that fundamental principle of Government, *Salus populi suprema lex*. Of this first principle Sir William Temple observes in his *Essays*, “ The safety of Princes and States
“ lies in pursuing the true and common interest of
“ the nation they govern, without espousing those

“ of any party or faction ; or if these are so formed
 “ in a State, that they must incline to one or
 “ other, then to chuse and favour that which is
 “ most popular, or wherein the greatest or strongest
 “ part of the people appear to be engaged. For as
 “ the end of Government seems to be *salus populi*,
 “ the safety or welfare of the people, so the strength
 “ of the Government is the consent of the people,
 “ which made that maxim of *Vox Populi vox Dei* ;
 “ that is, the Governors, who are few, will ever be
 “ forced to follow the strength of the governed,
 “ who are many.”

John Bull. Extraordinary recurrences to first principles by the people, however well grounded and substantiated, as the origins of every free State, and authorised by the law of Nature, of Justice, and of Right, are not to be called forth but when prompt necessity excites to virtue, and the sword to oppose the rigid gripes of despotic power.

The Author. In admitting these primary laws as the inherent rights of a free nation, and the legal exercise of such general power, much depends on time and circumstances. The measure of oppression, and the degree of violation which the Constitution may have suffered, are not to be concluded on and taken as detailed, but must be universally felt ; and the nation can never be justified in resorting to such general principles of jurisprudence,

to such an exercise of tribunitial power, unless the affectionate appeals, the faithful remonstrances of a loyal people have been trampled on at the foot of the Throne; and the patience of freedom has grown grey in the weary solicitations to arbitrary arrogance. It is then when liberty assumes what reason dictates, virtue sanctions, and justice obtains; a wise and benevolent King will yield in the first instance, an administration spurning the narrow system of self-interest, will coincide when Royalty is disposed to actions of glory; and by enlightened measures and patriotic acts appease the public mind, and enrich itself with popular applause.

John Bull. You have explained the dernier resort to my satisfaction; and a question arises in my mind, if the present Parliament was to organize and establish the elective power of the nation, the next Parliament following their precedent of assumed power might repeal what the last had done; and in like manner continued innovations might arise in every subsequent Parliament.

The Author. There may be a doubt whether a House of Commons is vested with powers adequate to reform the representation; but it is the greatest of all popular delusions to amuse the public mind with the continued feeble efforts for this grand essential renovation. A general, manly, and conse-

quential mode of reform, suitable to the dignity of the nation and the rights of the people, is against as innovation, is inveighed against as perilous, fraught with danger, too hazardous for trial. There are three classes of men supporting these delusive ideas, these ignoble reflections on a great enlightened people; first, the self interested borough proprietors, placemen, and pensioners; secondly, those who not comprehending the nature and active power of Government, and not regarding either its mutability or its motions, while their own affairs go on prosperously, support every Administration, right or wrong. The third class are those who well know the present representation was formed by partial rights obtained from Norman despotism; these are the impartial and moderate men who are equally the friends of the Crown, as the Democratic part of the Constitution, but are infected with such a political cowardice, that however sensible they may be of the necessity of a general and equal representation, they are absorbed by timidity, and rather than amputate the gangrened limb, they are for applying palliatives. Hence arise all the partial and illusive modes of reform. And further, what has ever over-awed a Parliament, and induced an imbecile attack on this perversion of the Constitution, was the importance of establishing precedents so unlimited as an equal representation demands; they feel an innate conviction,

tion, that * “ it is not in Parliament *alone* that a
 “ remedy for Parliamentary disorders can be com-
 “ pleted ; hardly indeed can it begin there.”

John Bull. I approve of Mr. Burke’s idea ; and I am convinced, if the present House of Commons effected a partial reform, it would be a precedent equally unconstitutional as the Septennial Act. It is a subject of such magnitude to posterity, that a legal Convention for the express purpose is only constitutionally competent.

The Author. It is no impeachment of the authority of the House of Commons to doubt its competency ; it is for the benefit of posterity it should be held such. The disfranchising of charters, and the organization of the elective power of the people, are tantamount to the solemn and public confirmations of liberties, by the Charter of King John and Henry III. the Restoration and the Revolution, which were by national conventions, and by which were constituted the representation ; and it is a solecism in political argument to maintain, that redress of grievances can be effected by the authors of those grievances, or that corruptions can be purified by corruptors, or that reformation in any State can proceed from a body of self-interested and ambitious men, who are the acknow-

* Mr. Burke’s Thoughts on the Discontents, p. 100.

ledged abettors and supporters of the very infractions and abuses intended to be reformed. There is only one mode, in my humble opinion, by which a reform can constitutionally originate and be substantiated, and two ways to accomplish that purpose; the one, voluntary; the other by remonstrance, loyal yet firm, as founded on constitutional principles. The first of these I have before stated, the legality of which cannot be doubted; it would be an exertion of the prerogative, founded on those sacred principles which the body of the people it is held does possess as inherent rights. If therefore the nation has the power to depart from the express institutions of regular Government, when those institutions have been violated, in order to maintain its constitutional freedom; can it be said his Majesty has not the same power to effect the same purposes? As the guardian of the Constitution, he has an unlimited power in securing those liberties which the law creates; but the wisdom emanating from the same law has happily created a limited barrier, which prevents the Crown from counteracting the power with which it is invested. And if his Majesty was determined, in his gracious benevolence, to trust to the stanch loyalty of his affectionate people, his faithful subjects, and promote an equal representation of the Commons of Great Britain, the present Parliament could not with any colour of justice oppose such a popular measure. With this first proposition I shall conclude,

clude, That whenever the Government is agreed on the necessity of a reform, it never can be constitutionally effected but by a national convention, assembled by the prerogative of his Majesty for that express purpose—Reason rules the wise, opinion the multitude. If the torrent of opinion is running inimical to constitutional liberty, it is the duty of Government to check it. On the contrary, *vice versa*, to promote with all its energy that glorious end. The general opinion now dictates the necessity of a reform in the representation; that opinion is a permanent security, that if the measure be adopted, it will be effected with peace, harmony, and order. If the present House of Commons were to discover so much patriotic virtue and self-denial, as to effect this salutary measure, no exception would be taken, altho' the precedent be repugnant to the true spirit of the constitution.

If this voluntary mode be not embraced, a certain portion of future evils, from which we cannot say we shall be exempt, as the very first expensive war will incur them, will occasion a reform in the representation to originate from the people.

John Bull. I should hope the prospect of peaceful tranquillity will induce my Sovereign to give me such a pledge of his sacred attachment to my Constitution, as to render such a recurrence to political liberty unnecessary. But upon a subject of such

such magnitude, it is adviseable to draw from every source which offers. I should therefore be glad to hear what you have further to propose for the attainment of this great object, particularly as on your first proposal, we rather feed our hopes at the expence of our understandings, when we reflect that the private virtues of a Sovereign as a man do not necessarily constitute him a Patriot King.

The Author. In whatever relates to the maintaining of your constitutional liberty, I most chearfully comply. The measures which I have to propose will be grounded on the warrantable presumption, that if the sense of the great majority of people can be constitutionally collected, and laid at the foot of the Throne, a reform would be accomplished. Before I propose this mode a few reflections present themselves. The most undoubted proof of a wise Government is the peace, order, and unanimity of the public mind. A division of sentiment, and a disjunction of the common interest, are subjects of much import in society; for it can never be the interest of the Crown or the people to try their strength. Prerogative by an over-extension may, by the very measures it takes, work its own abridgment; and the people by a mistaken notion of liberty may endeavour to remove obstacles more imaginary than in fact, and by an exertion of their latent powers destroy the bond of union in the component parts of the Constitution, which may
 substitute

substitute anarchy for order, confound distinctions by loosening the ties of subordination; and in attempting to be more than free, finally become enslaved. It is therefore wise, it is just, it is prudent to adopt such measures, that the whole community may draw together as one political body. The mode which I should recommend goes no further than to a rule of conduct sanctioned by law, whereby the people may maintain their constitutional liberty. Hence the bugbear innovation must yield to the more calm dictates of national prudence. The nation, in pursuit of this lawful object will preserve a sacred reverence for the constituent parts of the Constitution, which are inviolable, particularly when the interests of the people are so intimately connected with its several institutions, and above all those laws of freedom which are the solid basis of the whole. But these excellent principles of Government are reduced to mere theories, if the nation's elective power be violated. And can any thing be more repugnant to freedom and to the spirit of our Constitution, than to affirm, that the Constitution of Parliament is perverted, and that none but the violators are competent to reform the abuse. Surely it is a reproach of the highest nature to the good sense of the age, an age which rivals ancient Rome in the splendor of its arts and sciences; an age in which knowledge is disseminated through all orders of the State, when superstition yields to gentle toleration,

toleration ; when commerce has supplanted military ferocity, and the minds of men become civilized. It is impossible to indulge a thought so inglorious, so unworthy of those truly independent country Gentlemen who must be the principals in reforming this abuse. Such Gentlemen, both in and out of the House, whose constitutional integrity is proof, who have large interests at stake, and who have but one common interest with the people, by this reform will find their way to Parliament without expence, and beyond a shadow of doubt will be as anxious to strengthen the arm of Government in every measure relative to the interests and honour of the kingdom as the venal tribe ; a mercenary, cringing, fawning few, who never stand upright before a great man ; but from a natural bias of the heart, and curve of the mind, sacrifice the public interest for their own profit ; equally insincere in their attachments, they dupe their superiors, and exulting in their duplicity, afterwards despise them for their credulity ; and having created a division of interest between the Crown and the people, have introduced a system of plunder. Nothing can resist this system, which commencing with a treacherous sacrifice of the common interest, must finally end in either slavery or anarchy, but the firm union of the independent country gentlemen and citizens, to effect an equal representation, and establish the freedom of election on a permanent and general principle. The
 spirit

spirit for a reform by natural consequence must become general; the people will see their interest in it; abuses will still increase, and then they will feel the necessity of stemming that torrent which for many years has been widely spreading through the stamina of the Constitution, and loosening those ties which support the noble edifice, and which an independent Parliament only can preserve.

A reform will never be effected unless adopted by a cool wisdom, a prompt judgment, and a capacious mind, operating on a sober extensive plan. Every true Englishman, impressed with the value of his free Constitution, will make order his guide, and the public welfare his pursuit; and as I should hope there is not one single parish in the kingdom but what has some friends to constitutional liberty, and there can be none of that description but who are advocates for the independence of Parliament, I should propose that, to collect the real unbiassed sense of the nation on this measure, a few friends to the Constitution, independent gentlemen, and citizens in every parish of every city, town, borough corporate, and village in the kingdom, in each of their respective parishes, without calling a meeting of the inhabitants, which might create disorder, should nominate one from among themselves, who should the following day go from house to house within his parish, attended by not more than two gentlemen,
and

and present to every householder paying scot and lot a proposition for obtaining their right of equal representation ; and every householder approving the measure and the delegate should sign his name. A majority of householders thus approving should be deemed conclusive for a parish, and every parish of every city, town, borough corporate, and village, having in like peace and good order been thus consulted, a majority of parishes thus approving should be deemed conclusive for a county. The delegates of the parishes thus deputed with the collective sense of a county, should by agreement meet at an appointed place, and ballot for one among themselves to constitute a national Committee of representation, a majority of counties having in the same orderly manner deputed their representatives, the national Committee of representation should assemble at an appointed place, and select from among themselves ten persons, according to the Constitution, who should lay at the foot of the Throne the collected sense of the nation ; and his Majesty might be addressed in a constitutional manner something to the following purport :

After expressing in the sincerest and warmest manner their duty and allegiance to his Majesty, and their loyal attachment to his illustrious family, they should make known to his Majesty, that they
are

are a Committee deputed with the collective sense of his Majesty's faithful and loving subjects.

To express their deep concern in finding that all the statutes made to preserve the freedom of election, and the independence of Parliament, are rendered null and void by those circumstances, which in the natural course of things might have been expected from the partial establishment of the elective power of the people, and the opening left for the speculation of private interest.

To represent to his Majesty that the prosperity of his Majesty's dominions wholly depends, under Divine Providence on a harmony between the Popular, Legislative, and Executive branches of their excellent Constitution; and they are convinced that nothing can preserve that prosperity and uninterrupted harmony from the attacks of disaffection, or the underminings of vicious ambition, but an equal and free representation, and shortening the continuance of Parliaments.

To recall to his Majesty's mind the general sense of his faithful people on this subject during the former part of his reign; that the obstacles opposed to such an enlightened, necessary, and beneficial a measure were remote from his Majesty's gracious benevolence. The opposition arose from a number of self-interested individuals, whose influence in the

Legislature can promote an armament to obtain preferment, or prolong a war to make their fortunes; and these measures have been so adopted at the expence of millions of money, and to the loss of the lives of thousands of their fellow countrymen, to the high offence against the Divine laws and the freedom of their happy Constitution, and which have grievously oppressed his Majesty's poor subjects, who are in consequence labouring under the weight of accumulated taxes, and the great advance of the necessaries of life.

To humbly testify their affliction for these oppressive evils, and to represent to his Majesty, that this alarming aristocratic power of the Commons is the highest testimony that the Constitution of Parliament is violated by the defect in the representation of the people.

To assure his Majesty in the most unfeigned terms their determination to support his Majesty in his just prerogatives with their lives and fortunes; but that they are determined to reclaim their constitutional rights of a free and equal representation; that they will maintain inviolable the Constitution in all its branches pure and entire; and that they will unanimously support the dignity of his Majesty's Crown and the honour and interests of the kingdom; and when the one shall be insulted, or the other be attacked, they will produce such
liberal

liberal supplies and extensive resources, as shall be unexampled in any former times for a defensive war.

To represent to his Majesty's wisdom that the present situation of Europe assures a tranquillity to his kingdom highly favourable to their demands, to the nation's immediate interests, and to the glory of his Majesty's reign. They humbly therefore solicit his Majesty to exercise a prerogative so wisely placed in his Royal hands, to dissolve the present representation, and by virtue of the same prerogative command a Convention sworn to the only express purpose of establishing the freedom of election and the independence of Parliament on true constitutional principles.

To assure his Majesty that they have maturely weighed every circumstance, have analyzed the effects, and anticipate the happy consequences; that they have taken in every point of view the interests to be affected, the disadvantages it will be attended with, and the balance of power which will be attained; that in none of those circumstances do they perceive that his Majesty's just prerogatives will be encroached on, or his dignity retrenched. On the contrary, the equilibrium necessary for the free operation of Government will be constitutionally poised.

Finally, to represent to his Majesty, That in this their Constitutional claim, they are prompted by that duty which every Briton owes to the maintaining of constitutional liberty ; and in this their lawful demand, they discharge that obligation which their ancestors entailed on them, which was, *To preserve the freedom of election, and maintain the independence of Parliament* ; and this they are bound to do for the immediate security of their Constitution, for the benefit of their children, and to transmit the liberties they received from their ancestors unimpaired to posterity.

John Bull. The particular points of the address are congenial to the sentiments of my heart ; my highest wishes centre in the great objects of a general and equal representation, and the shorter duration of Parliaments. It is impossible his Majesty could oppose a measure required by the fundamental laws of the Constitution, and so necessary for the support of its freedom ; that his Majesty could object to make his people happy and united, and by this measure *conciliate all disaffection*, and render himself immortal honour, would be high treason to suppose.

The Author. If the collective sense of the nation was in this manner delivered before the Throne, his Majesty and the Parliament would embrace the
dignified

dignified act, and in the plenitude of their wisdom hand down to posterity a Constitution, which neither ambition could pervert, or injustice annihilate.

SECTION X.

*A Constitutional Mode of Reform.**The Author.*

BEFORE we can enter on the particular mode of reforming the representation, private interest, that powerful bulwark which sustains the rotten boroughs, renders a few remarks necessary. A strong objection may be taken to the * mode of applying the public money to purchase these boroughs; for if they were disfranchised of their elective privileges, the proprietors might make them a better money property, by the increase of population and the revival of trade which would follow; it being a notorious fact, that the decline of numerous boroughs is owing to the monopoly of noble Lords and hereditary Members, who possess every inch of land, to the exclusion of trade and manufactories; in consequence, the surplus of population emigrates to villages, which multiply in every part of the kingdom, while the rotten boroughs are sinking into contemptible ruin. There are some exceptions, where a division of interests exists in boroughs; but in these the practice of

* Mr. Pitt's Proposition, 1783.

building a number of small cottages, in order to secure the seat of a hereditary member, is equally a gross abuse of the Constitution and a reproach to the common sense of the people. Such representatives, in both instances, confide in the number of their houses, and not in the fair estimation of the electors. Their tenants become their vassals, and triumph over the independent few. Hence the men of real substance, who are the support of the poor, and the trusty friends of the State, have no influence in the motions of Government; and being juggled out of their constitutional rights, become the unanimous, though silent abhorers of that infamous system of corruption, which substitutes cunning and treachery for wisdom and integrity, which involves the idea of a free Government with absolute power, and gives a flat refutation to the theory of the Constitution.

John Bull. If proprietors of boroughs, by their being disfranchised, would be deprived of their annual rentals, in all such cases, where private property yields to public benefit, an adequate consideration by the public should be given.

The Author. Most assuredly. But it appears their rentals would be benefitted by a reform; but I do not attempt to affirm it would be equal to the douceurs from Ministry; these are private considera-

tions and private interests, which, by a personification of the Constitution, it may be said to know nothing of; it is totally ignorant of the possibility of such practices; it presumes it was established for universal benefit, for one common interest, and not a partial monopoly. That every objection may therefore be done away which is opposed to the disfranchising of the elective power only of boroughs, let us for a moment consider the inroads of time and fashion. If the Constitution was originally free, its vital principle must have been a spirit of universal justice, which no subsequent innovation could derive the sanction of a precedent from, if the usage was inimical to that principle. And at the present day, if true equity, reason, and general liberty, which the Constitution is founded on, renounces the usage, that usage is an usurpation of the constitutional rights of the people.

After the Norman invasion had defaced the free Constitution, established by the Great Alfred, and annulled the * elective power of the people,

* This privilege has been much contested between monarchical and popular parties. But when we consider the difference between military and commercial ages, and that the mode may vary, but the principle be the same, the difference becomes reconciled, particularly when we are undoubtedly informed the Britons and Saxons were a free people, whose Governments were founded on the equitable principles of election; but on this

people. The contests for the Crown by the successors of William the Conqueror, afforded the people a partial resumption of their Saxon laws; and the charters of various town tithings, or boroughs, were renewed or granted to different Barons by the different Monarchs, to support their respective interests, by which a partial acquisition of elective privileges spread through some part of the kingdom, while other parts still remained destitute, and have continued so down to this present day; and we are still preserving the remembrance of Norman despotism, by thus continuing the chartered elective rights of particular boroughs.

It would become a matter of enquiry, why the now numerous and populous villages should have formerly been exempt from a participation in the motions of Government by delegation, when the

this subject monarchical writers, as Dr. Stuart well observes*, “by founding the prerogative so high, infer the absurdest consequences.” Mr. Hume, who rests much on the authority of Dr. Brady, an arbitrary writer, † doubts the Saxon Wittena Gemote, or Parliament, to consist of any other order than the Nobility. The *Principes, Satrapæ, Optimates, Magnates, Procures*, which seem to suppose an Aristocracy, and to exclude the Commons. In a few pages further he observes, Security was provided by the Saxon laws to all Members of the Wittena Gemote, both in going and returning, *except they were notorious thieves and robbers*, which requires no comment.

* Stuart Antiquity Eng. Const. p. 52. † Hume, vol. I, 204 and 208.

inhabitants of those villages equally contribute to the public revenue as boroughs. If we were not informed that the civil dissensions and wars occasioned the * great mass of people to reside within the protection of cities and boroughs, every one of which was furnished with castles for that purpose. But with the abolition of the feudal system, internal peace promoted a general confidence, population increased and spread, villages were formed, and with the introduction of commerce new towns arose on the ruins of the rotten boroughs, whose privi-

* “ We know from Bede,” says a candid and manly investigator into the antiquities of our Government, “ That there
 “ were in England long before his time twenty-eight famous
 “ cities, besides innumerable castle and walled towns of note,
 “ many of which, though now extremely decayed or quite
 “ ruined, were then very considerable ; the greatest and richest
 “ part of the nation living in those times, for the most part,
 “ in cities, or great towns, for their greater benefit or security,
 “ and the greater parts of the lands of England in the Saxon
 “ times, and long after, lay uncultivated and over-run with
 “ forests and bogs ; so that the inhabitants of those cities and
 “ boroughs being then so considerable, for estates in land as
 “ well as other riches, could not be excluded from having
 “ places both in the British and Saxon Great Councils. What
 “ man of sense can believe, that the ancient and potent cities of
 “ London, York, Canterbury, Lincoln, &c. should ever be
 “ excluded from having any hand in the great consultation
 “ about giving money and making laws, and for the public de-
 “ fence of the kingdom in the Saxon times, any more than they
 “ are now.”

Dr. Stuart's Antiquity of the English Constitution, p. 285.

Bibliotheca Poetica, p. 270. See also p. 272.

leges

leges retaining a * Norman aspect, the people found it to their interests to emigrate from them, which occasioned their decay.

John Bull. It does not appear to me, that any rational argument can be advanced, that the one common interest of the whole community should, however long the usage, be garbled, cut, and divided into partial lots. If these partial elective privileges can be vindicated by virtue of the Constitution, and be defended and maintained by the antiquity of the practice, at this day, it is in vain to talk of one common interest; it is a complete defeasance of common right.

The Author. Fortunately for Englishmen, the Constitution acquires its data from the Great Alfred; and its principles are founded on one common right for one common interest. The Norman invasion proved a paralytic stroke on freedom, under which every nerve of liberty became torpid. In every age since that period, various restoratives have been applied to recover it to its primitive tone; but still, as that revered patriot the great Earl of Chatham said, "It wants a new portion of health to enable it to bear its infirmities."

* One check to industry in England was the erecting of Corporations, an abuse which is not yet entirely corrected.

Hume, vol. III. p. 404.

This expressive sentence of the noble Earl's was an evident allusion to the partial and abused representation of the people. Of the corrupt representation of boroughs, at another time, he observed, "This is what is called the rotten part of the Constitution. It will not last the century. If it do not drop off, it must be amputated." And I presume, by a further enquiry of the inroads of time and fashion, it will appear that the nation may with strict legal propriety adopt an universal and equal organization of delegated power.

John Bull. It will afford me pleasure to have the usage impartially examined. Truth will dissipate prejudice, though she had the army of Xerxes against her.

The Author. It is the virtue of common interest to have truth for its basis. Your rights cannot be maintained without her. Endeavouring to continue therefore under her auspices, I find there are upwards of * sixty boroughs that formerly sent Members to Parliament, among which are Doncaster, Whitby, Kingston upon Thames, Kidderminster, Newbury, Blandford, Chelmsford, Tunbridge, Bromsgrove, &c. &c. &c. If these populous boroughs were to resume their claims of representation, could the Crown legally and constitutionally refuse them? In the reign of James I. Aylesbury

* Brown Willis's Notitia Parliamentaria.

and some other boroughs claimed their constitutional privileges. The Crown resisted these claims on the ground of their having been so long dormant, but the plea was over-ruled; and if the above dormant boroughs were to claim in like manner, the Crown could not resist with justice; for beyond a doubt every man in the kingdom who contributes his quota to the support of Government, has an equal right to elect with his neighbour.

John Bull. If the measures you have proposed for a reform should fail, every one of these dormant boroughs should immediately claim their absolute right to representation, and contest the point with the Crown.

The Author. A very judicious idea, as the legality of it carries with it the advantage which Hamden enjoyed in the contest with Charles I.—the conviction of the public mind in favour of common right and common justice against tyranny and usurpation. Upon further enquiry we find there are also upwards of seventy boroughs, styled such on ancient record, but which never sent members to Parliament since the Conquest; although they enjoyed constitutional privileges under the Saxons, as town tithings, among which are Leeds, Birmingham, Stratford on Avon, Walsall, Kendall, Burton upon Trent, Macclesfield, &c. And it is worthy of remark, that at this day one of these
towns,

towns, Birmingham for instance, contains near 80,000 inhabitants, when the number of electors who send to Parliament three-fourths of its members amount to but 41,000. And the face of things is so entirely changed in the course of time, that every argument in respect to the present elective rights of partial boroughs must fall to the ground.

From Edward I. to the reign of Edward VI. all the boroughs in Lancashire were frequently excused by the Sheriff from sending Members to Parliament on account of their *poverty*; whereas that * county now ranks with the first in England for opulence and trade.

The

* Mr. Chalmers observes, in his Estimate of the Comparative Strength of Great-Britain, " That it is not too much to expect, that Lancashire alone, considering its numerous manufactures and extensive commerce, is now able to make a more steady exertion amidst modern warfare than the whole kingdom in the time of Elizabeth. The traders of Liverpool alone fitted out at the commencement of the late war with France, between the 26th August, 1778, and the 17th April, 1779, 120 privateers, armed each with ten to thirty guns, but mostly from fourteen to twenty. From an accurate list, containing the name and appointment of each, it appears that these privateers measured 30,787 tons, carrying 1986 guns and 8754 men. The fleet sent against the Armada in 1588 measured 31,685 tons, and was navigated by 15,272 seamen. From the efforts of a single town, we may infer that the private ships of war formed a greater force
" during

The Merchant Guilds, or Charters, were granted to boroughs for the express purpose of promoting commerce and protecting trade. Can it in any shape answer these essential purposes, when noble Lords and hereditary Members monopolize every acre of land, and every house in their boroughs, whose trade is utterly destroyed by the decrease of population occasioned by this monopoly? Is it consistent with justice, is it agreeable to reason, is it consonant to the texture and genius of a free State, founded on popular representation, that some boroughs, which contain not a score of inhabitants, should have influence in the motions of Government by their representatives, and other boroughs, such as Manchester and Birmingham, which contain 150,000 inhabitants, should have no voice in the Legislature.

John Bull. But it is said the inhabitants of Birmingham and Manchester do not wish to send representatives to Parliament; they desire not the trouble of election; the jarring of interests and division of parties might affect their trade.

The Author. If that be true, it is a very strong evidence of the entire change of customs with time,

“ during the war with the Colonies, than the nation with all its
 “ unanimity and zeal was able to equip under the potent Go-
 “ vernment of Elizabeth.”

as elective charters were originally, as I before observed, granted for the promotion of trade. But I believe what they fear is the corruption and confusion of an election; what they despise and dread is the general depraved state of the elective power of the people. Otherwise, if they possess not the ancient spirit of their free-born ancestors, if they have sunk into a lukewarm moderation, a contemptible indifference, they are worthy of slavery.

John Bull. They say that they are well content with county Members; they have a pledge in their independence paramount to their grievances.

The Author. In every free State, the secretions of commerce pervade the interests of the landholders, and the produce of land and the increase of trade have but one interest; all borough representation may therefore be done away, and a free Parliament be constituted by independent county Members. But in that case, every inhabitant paying scot and lot, whether residing in a village, town, or city, should have a voice; and that the members might not be put to any expence, the inhabitants of every parish should elect delegates, and those delegates elect the immediate representatives; the election of the last might be compleated in a few hours.

John

John Bull. But in the name of a freeholder there is something so venerable, that the prejudice naturally attached to long revered characters would not reconcile the abolition of their elective power.

The Author. Very just; I shall therefore offer you a plan for a general representation, in which that respected body shall still retain its elective privileges. With the freeholders I would include the copyholders also, who should vote for delegates, and those delegates elect the Knights of the Shire, as I am fully persuaded a fair and equal representation of the Commons of England can never be obtained by permitting every order of the people to vote for immediate representatives to Parliament. Further, it will have this desirable effect, there never can be any long contested elections, and the private fortunes of Members will never be affected by their laudable services for the good of their country. The present expence to which a Member is put, is not only an infinite disgrace to the nation, but an act of the highest injustice to the individual; and as such, Government is bound by every tie of honour and justice to yield to a reform.

The freeholders and copyholders in every hundred or division of a county, I should therefore propose, shall elect delegates from among themselves in the proportion of one delegate to every

five freeholders and copyholders. The delegates thus freely chosen in every hundred, &c. on the day of election should assemble at their respective county towns, and there elect the Knights of the Shire, which might be done in a few hours in every county in the kingdom.

This mode of electing Knights of the Shire would certainly accord with the original institution, which limited the qualifications of electors to the possession of freeholds of 40*s. per annum*, to which at this day, according to the decrease of the denomination of money, 40*l. per annum* may be considered as not more than equivalent. The delegates therefore which the small freeholders or copyholders should elect within their respective hundreds, I should propose to be men of not less than 40*l. per annum* freehold or copyhold property; and this plan of electing Knights of the Shire, I trust, is eligible and constitutional.

John Bull. I would be candid in starting an objection if any thing weighty struck me, I approve therefore generally, and hope you will suggest one as unobjectionable on the commercial part.

The Author. Your approbation is my chief aim, but in this I cannot promise the same facility; for the variety of interests a general reform in the representation has to encounter, as well as the diversity of opinions,

nions, the rooted prejudices, and a most prevailing disposition to nurse old customs like declining age, even when evils are acknowledged to be attached to the one, and disease has rendered the hope of life desperate in the other. Even though Nature influences the preservation of the aged, and reason tells us the continuing prejudicial customs is wrong, yet such is the force of habit, that we cherish both with sentiments somewhat similar. We remember the aged with filial gratitude, and a long continued practice insinuates a regard for the other. But the absolute necessity of a general reform renders the dissection of the victim essential to constitutional liberty. Yet where shall we look for men to begin the amputation, where shall we find men so disposed whose situations in life justly entitle them to the operation. It is to be hoped the good sense of this enlightened age will induce those to accomplish it whose due province it is to render to the freedom of Britain so desirable a purpose, I trust they will embrace this peaceful opportunity and establish on a pure foundation the pyramid of liberty, as delineated by the Constitution, and not leave the issue to stern necessity or popular tumult. From a variety of plans for a reform in the representation, some truths may be gathered, and a permanent system be produced. In pursuit of your interest, John Bull, I am encouraged to submit one with all its exceptions for your approbation.

John Bull. I never expect to see a perfect system of representation; that mode, which being founded on constitutional principles, will assure the free administration of the Constitution to the people, is all that is required.

The Author. Beyond a doubt, the nearer an organization of elective power approaches to constitutional principles, the more eligible it will be; I shall therefore rigidly adhere to those ancient divisions and districts, the parishes, hundreds, and counties, unto which elective privileges were constituted by the Great Alfred, for the subordinations of magistracy, from the Throne down to the decenary, or tithing, or parish, which was a corporation of ten householders, who elected one from among themselves to represent and be answerable for them in the superior courts; and this principle of election ascended to the Eolderman, who was the chief magistrate of the county, and from him to the Throne itself.

The people of England, exclusive of Wales, are now computed to be about eight millions, who are represented in Parliament by 489 representatives; Wales sends 24, and Scotland 45, which make together 558. Of this number 369 are returned by 41,000 electors, some of whom are of the very lowest orders of people, while there are
thousands

thousands who contribute largely to the public revenue, and have great interests at stake, yet have no manner of choice of representatives.

John Bull. But it is said, that although a man be elected for a paltry borough, he is declared by the Constitution to be the representative of the community at large; though he be elected by the poor of a borough, he is equally the representative of the rich.

The Author. Assuredly so, for this reason, the terms of the Constitution suppose the Members independent and honest, and the equity of law supposes its operation cannot destroy its principle. But as the contrary is too often the fact, where is the man who cannot perceive the fallacy of our borough representation? What security have the people against a Member who will barter for boroughs? Will any man be so hardy as to affirm, that his constitutional integrity will not suffer by the infamous traffic; it is a public sale and prostitution of an Englishman's sacred rights; and a man who commences borough-monger, violates every principle of human dignity and public honour, and is unworthy the name of an Englishman.

John Bull. I am really ashamed to have taken up so much of your time on a subject, the very

mention of which must convince every man of common-sense in England of its being an unwarrantable abuse of the rights of the people, and a dangerous innovation on the constitution.

The Author. An innovation on the Constitution this practice most assuredly is, in the most unequivocal sense; and yet, strange to tell, the reform of this abuse is held out as innovation—Innovation is the word set up *in terrorem*.

John Bull. I am satisfied the word innovation is made the stalking horse of corruption. I beg you will therefore proceed in laying down a constitutional and temperate mode of reform.

The Author. The plan which I shall offer you will be to elect a number of representatives on the commercial interest, amounting to the same of which the present Parliament is constituted. But that every householder paying scot and lot, whether residing in a city, town, or village, shall have his share in the motions of Government, by virtue of his choice of delegates, who shall elect by ballot the immediate representatives.

Before I proceed to the organization of the counties, it may be necessary to notice the representation of the eight Cinque Ports, each of which send two Barons, or Members, to the Commons
House

House of Parliament. These privileges were granted to the Ports on account of fitting out ships against the coast of France, which appears at this day, when the course of time has so enlarged the views of the different nations, and aggrandized their mutual strength by such powerful navies, wholly unnecessary and void. From these Cinque Ports therefore may be taken their 16 Members, which may be transferred to the large maritime counties in the following manner :

Yorkshire is divided into three divisions, or Ridings, East, West, and North, and sends to Parliament on the landed interest two Members ; but each of the Ridings containing as many acres of land as some of our largest counties. Two representatives on the landed interest may be assigned to each Riding ; therefore

To Yorkshire may be added	_____	_____	4
Devonshire	_____	_____	1
Lincolnshire	_____	_____	1
Northumberland	_____	_____	1
Hampshire	_____	_____	1
Kent	_____	_____	1
Effex	_____	_____	1
Suffex	_____	_____	1
Norfolk	_____	_____	1
Suffolk	_____	_____	1
Lancashire	_____	_____	1
Dorsetshire	_____	_____	1
Cornwall	_____	_____	1

These additional Members to be elected in the same manner as before stated for Knights of the Shire.

By taking the gross number of inhabitants each county at present contains, the number of representatives to the number of inhabitants are extremely disproportionate in some, particularly Cornwall, Wiltshire, &c. And to adopt an equal and adequate representation of the commercial interest, each county ought to be represented according to the number of inhabitants which it contains; and to regulate this without any innovation on their present districts and divisions of hundreds and parishes, may be the most eligible, as being constitutional. I shall therefore strictly regard those ancient divisions, and render the cities, towns, and villages, in some measure subservient to them,

The number of delegates which in each parish within a county, whether constituting a city, town, or village, should be chosen, may be rated at the proportion of one delegate to every ten householders paying scot and lot. The number of taxed inhabitants within a parish to be ascertained by the parish books; and the number of representatives on the commercial interest which the delegates are to elect, may be calculated at a ratio of five to every 100,000 inhabitants within each

each county; from this ratio will arise a number, which may be termed a contingent surplus, occurring from the organization of the county of Middlesex, which I shall speak of in the order it follows with the other counties. This surplus may be added to the cities and principal towns, which will then continue to return the same number of representatives as at present, and others more only elected on this general plan, which I am desirous to render an equal and constitutional representation.

Upon the above principles of delegation, I shall organize each county, adding their present computed number of inhabitants, the number of representatives which are now sent to Parliament, and also the hundreds and number of parishes by which each county is divided. A close regard to the minutiae of figures is neither material or requisite. If a constitutional reform be carried into effect, a true census of inhabitants no doubt will be ascertained by accurate returns, and the number of representatives from each respective county will be rendered more strictly proportionate than a general computation can possibly regulate.

BEDFORDSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 69,000—M. P.

4. The county returns two of these representatives on the landed interest, and the town of Bedford only returns the remaining two on the commercial, which at the ratio proposed are deficient to the number of people by one representative. This county is divided into nine hundreds, containing 124 parishes, and may be subdivided into three districts in the following manner :

1st DISTRICT.

Representatives

The hundreds of Wyly, Stoden, and Redbornstoke.—
 Every householder of every parish within this district, paying scot and lot, to vote for the election of delegates within his parish. The number of delegates determinable by a decimation of one delegate from every ten qualified householders; and the delegates of each respective parish, thus freely chosen to elect by ballot — at

the county town, Bedford *2

This mode of delegating the commercial interest to be general, and operate uniformly within every parish of every district within each county in the kingdom.

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Manshead, Flitt, and Clifton, — at

the town of Dunstable 1

3d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Biggleswade, Wixamtree, and Barford, at

the town of Biggleswade 1

* One is added to this number from the surplus arising from the organization of the county of Middlesex.

BERKSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 104,000.—M. P. 9. which give a surplus of two Members above the proposed ratio, allowing for two Knights of the Shire which the county returns on the landed interest. It is divided into twenty hundreds, and may be sub-divided into the five following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

Representatives

The hundreds of Reading, }
Theal, Faircross, and Kent- } the county town, Reading *2
bury, — — at }

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Ripples }
Moor, Bray, Bernersh, and } the town of Windsor *2
Cookham, — — at }

3d DISTRICT.

The hundred of Hormer, Oke, }
Ganfield, Farrington, and } the town of Abingdon 1
Shrievenham, — — at }

4th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Sonninge, }
Wargrove, and Charlton, at } the town of Oakingham 1

5th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Morton, }
Compton, Wanting, and } the town of Wallingford 1
Lambourn, — — at }

* To each of these numbers one is added from the surplus.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 118,000.—M. P. 14, which give a surplus of 6 above the ratio. This county returns two representatives on the landed interest, and is divided into eight hundreds, containing 185 parishes, and may be subdivided into the five following districts.

Representatives.

1st DISTRICT.

The hundred of Buckingham, } the county town, Bucking-
 — — — at } ham — — —*₂

2d DISTRICT.

The hundred of Aylesbury and } the town of Aylesbury *₂
 Ashenden, — — at }

3d DISTRICT.

The hundred of Disborough, } the town of High Wickham 1
 — — — at }

4th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Newport and } The town of Stony Strat-
 Cotflane, — — at } ford — — — 1

5th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Burnham and } the town of Amersham — 1
 Stoke, — — at }

* One is added to this number from the surplus.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE.—Inhabitants.—145,000.—
M. P. 6, which are deficient to the number of
people by 3. This county returns two represen-
tatives on the landed interest, and two represen-
tatives are returned by the University of Cam-
bridge, which return may continue. It is divided
into 17 hundreds, containing 163 parishes, and
may be subdivided into the five following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

		Representatives.
The hundreds of Flendish,	}	The county town, Cam- bridge — — *2
Chesterton, and Staine, at		

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Ely, North- stow, and Papworth,	}	the city of Ely — 1
at		

3d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Chevely, Stapleho, Radfield, and Chil- ford, — — at	}	the town of Newmarket 1

4th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Armingford, Southstow, Wetherly, Trip- low, Wittlesford, — at	}	the town of Royfton — 1

5th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Wisbich and Wisford, — at	}	the town of Wisbich — 1

* One is added to this number from the surplus.

CHESHIRE.—Inhabitants, 147,000.—M. P. 4, which are deficient to the number of people by 5. This county returns two representatives on the landed interest, and is divided into seven hundreds, containing 87 Parishes, each of which may constitute a district.

1st DISTRICT.

	Representatives.
The hundred of Wirehall, at the city of Chester	— *2

2d DISTRICT.

The hundred of Namptwich, at the town of Namptwich	— 3
--	-----

3d DISTRICT.

The hundred of Macclesfield, at the town of Macclesfield	— 1
--	-----

4th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Northwich, at the town of Congleton	— 1
--	-----

5th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Broxton, at the town of Malpas	— 1
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6th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Bucklow, at the town of Knotsford	— 1
--	-----

7th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Edisbury, at the town of Frodsham	— 1
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* One is added to this number from the surplus.

CORNWALL.—Inhabitants, 154,000.—M. P. 44, which give a surplus of 35 above the ratio. This county returns two representatives on the landed interest, to which number, being a large maritime county, may be added another, taken from the Cinque Ports. It is divided into nine hundreds, containing 161 parishes, and may be subdivided into the seven following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

	Representatives
The hundred of East, — at the county town, Launceston *2	

2d DISTRICT.

The hundred of Kerryer,	at the town of Falmouth	— 1
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3d DISTRICT.

The hundred of Powden,	at the town of Truro	— 1
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4th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Trigg and Pider,	at } the town of Bodmin	— 1
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5th DISTRICT.

The hundred of West,	at the town of Leskard	— 1
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6th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Penwith,	at the town of Penfance	— 1
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7th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Lefnowith and Stratton,	at } the town of Camelford	— 1
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* One is added to this number from the surplus.

CUMBERLAND.—Inhabitants, 82,200.—M. P. 6, which are proportionate to the number of people. This county returns two representatives on the landed interest. It is divided into five wards, containing 58 parishes, and may be subdivided into the three following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

	Representatives
The wards of Cumberland and Eskdale, _____ at } the city of Carlisle	— 2

2d DISTRICT.

The ward of Southallerdale, _____ at the town of Whitehaven	— 1
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3d DISTRICT.

The wards of Leath and North, _____ — _____ at } the town of Penrith	— 2
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DERBYSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 131,000.—M.P.s, which are deficient to the number of people by 4. This county returns two representatives on the landed interest. It is divided into six hundreds, containing 106 parishes, and may be subdivided into the four following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

Representatives

The hundreds of Morlestone, Appletree, and Reppington, _____ at	}	the county town, Derby	3
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2d DISTRICT.

The hundred of Scarfdale, at the town of Chesterfield — 1

3d DISTRICT.

The hundred of Winksworth, at the town of Ashborn — 1

4th DISTRICT.

The hundred of High Peak, at the town of Bakwell — 1

DEVONSHIRE—Inhabitants, 304,000—M.P.26, which give a surplus of 9 above the ratio. This county returns two representatives on the landed interest; to which number, being a large maritime county, may be added another from the Cinque Ports. It is divided into 33 hundreds, containing 394 parishes, and may be subdivided into the eleven following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

	Representatives
The hundreds of Wonford, Clifton and Exminster, at } the city of Exeter	— *4

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Roborough, Plympton, and Armington, at }	the town of Plymouth — 2
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3d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Branton, Show- ell, and South Moulton, at }	the town of Barnstable — 2
--	----------------------------

4th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Tiverton, Hal- berton, Haurudge, and West Budley, at }	the town of Tiverton — 1
--	--------------------------

5th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Tavistock and Lifton, at }	the town of Tavistock — 1
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6th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Fremington, Black Torrington, and Taw- at }	the town of Torrington — 1
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7th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Colridge and } the town of Dartmouth — 1
 Stanborough, — at

8th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Shebbear and } the town of Biddeford — 1
 Hartland, — at

9th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Axminster, } the town of Honiton — 1
 Culliton, Ottery, Budley, }
 and Hemyoke, — at

10th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Tingbridge, } the town of Ashburton — 1
 part of Hawrudge and Hey- }
 tor, — at

11th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Crediton Wi- } the town of Crediton — 1
 theridge, and Winkley — at

* One is added to this number from the surplus.

DORSETSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 146,000.—M. P. 20, which give a surplus of 11 above the ratio. This county returns two representatives on the landed interest; to which number, being a large a maritime county, may be added another, taken from the Cinque Ports. It is divided into 29 hundreds, containing 248 parishes, and may be subdivided into the seven following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

Representatives.

The hundreds of George, Totcomb and Woodbury, Puddleton, and Bere, — at } the county town, Dorchester *2

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Culliton, Winfrith, Rushmore, Hafflar, Rowbarrow, and Uggcomb, — at } the town of Weymouth and Melcomb Regis — *2

3d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Church, Benunster, and Redhove, at } the town of Lyme Regis — 1

4th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Cogdean, Badbury, Knowlton, and Pimperne, — at } the town of Pool — 1

5th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Goderthorn and Bridport, Tollerford and Eggarton, — at } the town of Bridport — 1

6th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Upwimborn, Redlane, Newton, and Cranborn, — at } the town of Shaftesbury — 1

7th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Sherborn, Buckland, Whiteway, Yetminster, and Brownfell, — } the town of Sherborn — 1

** One to each of these numbers is added from the Surplus.

DURHAM.—Inhabitants, 100,000.—M. P. 4, which are deficient to the number of people by 3. This county returns two representatives on the landed interest. It is divided into four wards, containing 84 parishes, each of which wards may constitute a District.

1st DISTRICT.

	Representatives
The ward of Chester, — at the city of Durham —	2

2d DISTRICT.

The ward of Easington, — at the town of Sunderland —	2
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3d DISTRICT.

The ward of Darlington, — at the town of Darlington —	1
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4th DISTRICT.

The ward of Stockton, — at the town of Stockton —	1
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ESSEX.—Inhabitants, 214,000.—M. P. 8, which are deficient to the number of people by 5. This county returns two representatives on the landed interest, and being a large maritime county, another representative, taken from the Cinque Ports, may be added to that number. It is divided into 19 hundreds, containing 415 parishes, and may be subdivided into the eight following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

Representatives

The hundreds of Chelmsford, }
 Witham, and Dunmow, at } the county town, Chelmsford 2

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Lexden and }
 Hinckford, — at } the town of Colchester — 2

3d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Tendring }
 Winstree, and Thurstable, }
 — at } the town of Harwich —

4th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Dengy and }
 Rochford, — at } the town of Malden — 1

5th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Becontree and }
 Havering Liberty, — at } the town of Rumford — 1

6th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Ongar, Wal- }
 tham, and Harlow, — at } the town of Chipping Ongar 1

7th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Uttlesford, }
 Clavering, and Freshwell, at } the town of Saffron Walden 1

8th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Chafford and }
 Barnstable, — at } the town of Brentwood — 1

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 164,000.—
M. P. 8, which are deficient to the number of
people by 2. This county returns two representa-
tives on the landed interest. It is divided into 30
hundreds, containing 280 parishes, and may be
subdivided into the six following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

Representatives

The hundreds of King's Bar- ton and Dudston, West Bur, St. Briavel's, Brideslow, and Dutchy, — at	}	the city of Gloucester — 2
--	---	----------------------------

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Crawthorn and Minety, Britwells Bar- rows, Rapsgate, Bradley, and Slaughter, — at	}	the town of Cirencester — 2
--	---	-----------------------------

3d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Tewkesbury, Tibleston, Westminster, Bot- toe, Deerhurst, — at	}	the town of Tewkesbury *2
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4th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Cheltenham, Cleeve, and Kiftsgate, at	}	the town of Cheltenham 1
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5th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Longtree, Berkley, Whiston, Bisley, and Thornbury, — at	}	the town of Tetbury — 1
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6th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Grumbaldah, Puclechurch, Langley Wines- head, and Henbury, — at	}	the town of Chipping Sedbury 1
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* One is added to this number from the surplus.

HAMPSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 170,000.—M.P.26, which give a surplus of 16 above the ratio. This county returns two representatives on the landed interest; to which number, being a large maritime county, may be added another, taken from the Cinque Ports. It is divided into 37 hundreds, containing 253 parishes, and may be subdivided into the eight following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

Representatives

The hundreds of Buddlesgate,
King's Somborn, Fawley,
Barton-Stacey, and Mainf-
borough, ——— at } the city of Winchester — *2

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Pontfdown,
Bosmere, Titchfield, Bishops-
Walthani, ——— at } the town of Portsmouth — *2

3d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Redbridge,
Manbridge, and New Fo-
rest, ——— at } the town of Southampton *2

4th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of East Medham } Isle of Wight,
and West Medham, — at } the town of Newport } *2

5th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Ringwood,
Fordingbridge, and Christ-
church, ——— at } the town of Ringwood — 1

6th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Andover,
Thorngate, Wherwell, Af-
trow, Evingar, Kingsclear,
and Overton, — at } the town of Andover — 1

7th DISTRICT:

The hundreds of Basingstoke,
Chutely, Holdshot, Odiham,
Cronal, Bermondspitt, and
Michael Dever, — at } the town of Basingstoke 1

8th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Finchdean,
East Meon, Meonstoke, Al-
ton, Selborn, and Bishop's-
Sutton, — at } the town of Petersfield — *1

**** One is added to each of these numbers from the surplus.

HARTFORDSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 103,000.—
M. P. 6, which are deficient to the number of
people by 1. This county returns two representa-
tives on the landed interest. It is divided into eight
hundreds, containing 121 parishes, and may be
subdivided into the five following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

Representatives

The hundreds of Hartford and
Broadwater, — at } the county town, Hartford *2

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Brogin and
Edwintree, — at } the town of Ware — 1

3d DISTRICT.

The hundred of Cashio, at the town of St. Alban's — 1

4th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Hitchin and
Odfey, — at } the town of Hitchin — 1

5th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Ducorum, at the town of Tring — 1

* One is added to this number from the surplus.

HEREFORDSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 98,000.—
M. P. 8, which give a surplus of 1 above the ratio.
This county returns two representatives on the
landed interest. It is divided into 11 hundreds,
containing 176 parishes, and may be subdivided
into the five following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

Representatives.

The hundreds of Grimsworth,
Webtree, and Ewayslacey, } the city of Hereford — *2
— — — at

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Wolphy and } the town of Leominster — 2
Wigmore, — — — at

3d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Greytree and } the town of Ross — 1
Wormlow, — — — at

4th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Radlow and } the town of Ledbury — 1
Broxash — — — at

5th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Stretford and } the town of Weobly — 1
Huntington, — — — at

* One is added to this number from the surplus,

HUNTINGDONSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 57,000.—
 M. P. 4, which are deficient to the number of
 people by 1. This county returns two representa-
 tives on the landed interest. It is divided into four
 hundreds, containing 78 parishes, and may be
 subdivided into the two following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

Representatives

The hundreds of Norman }
 Cross and Huntingstone, at } the county town, Huntingdon 2

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Toseland and }
 Leightonstone, ——— at } the town of St. Neot's — 1

KENT.—Inhabitants, 257,000.—M. P. 26, which give a surplus of 11 above the ratio. This county returns two representatives on the landed interest; to which number, being a large maritime county, may be added another, taken from the Cinque Ports. It is divided into 62 hundreds, containing 408 parishes, and may be subdivided into the eleven following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

Representatives

The hundreds of Bridge and Petham, Westgate, Down Chamford, Kinghamford, Stowting, Bircholtfranchise, _____ at } the city of Canterbury — 3

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Shamel, Hoo, Milton, Isle of Shepey, and Toltingtrow, _____ at } the city of Rochester — *2

3d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Maidstone, Larkfield, Eyhorn, Twiford, Rotham, Marden, Cranbrook, Barkley, and Rolvenden, _____ at } the town of Maidstone — *2

4th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Bewsborough, Folkestone, Loningborough, Heane, and Streats, _____ at } the town of Dover — *2

5th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Eastrey, Cornilo, Wingham, and Pref-ton, _____ at } the town of Sandwich — 1

6th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of New Church, }
 Langport, Allowbridge, } the town of New Romney 1
 Ham, Worth, Oxney, Ten-
 terden. and Blackburn, at }

7th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Blengate, Isle }
 of Thanet, Ringflow, and } the town of Margate — 1
 Whitstable, — at }

8th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Feversham, }
 Boston, Felborough, Chart } the town of Feversham — 1
 and Longbridge, and Ten-
 ham, — at }

9th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Dartford and }
 Wilmington, Axstane, Godf- } the town of Dartford — 1
 heath, Somerden, and Wef-
 terham, at — at }

10th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Blackheath, }
 Bromley, Beckenham, Rookef- } the town of Greenwich 1
 ley, and Lefnefs — at }

11th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Tunbridge, }
 Watlingston, Brencley and } the town of Tunbridge — 1
 Horfmunden, West and East
 Barnfield and Selbrittenen,
 — at }

* * * One is added to each of these numbers from the surplus.

LANCASHIRE.—Inhabitants, 260,000.—
M. P. 14, which are deficient to the number of
people by 1. This county returns two representa-
tives on the landed interest; to which number,
being a large maritime county, may be added an-
other, taken from the Cinque Ports. It is divided
into six hundreds, containing 61 parishes; each
of these hundreds may constitute a district.

1st DISTRICT.

	Representatives
The hundred of Fourness Loynfdale	or } the county town, Lancaster 2 at }

2d DISTRICT.

The hundred of West Derby at the town of Liverpool — 3

3d DISTRICT.

The hundred of Salford — at the town of Manchester 3

4th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Mounderness at the town of Preston — 2

5th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Layland — at the town of Wigan — 2

6th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Blackburn — at the town of Blackburn 2

LEICESTERSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 116,000.—
M. P. 4, which are deficient to the number of
people by 4. This county returns two representa-
tives on the landed interest. It is divided into six
hundreds, containing 192 parishes; each of these
hundreds may constitute a district.

1st DISTRICT.

Representatives

The hundred of East Goscote, at the county town, Leicester *2

2d DISTRICT.

The hundred of West Goscote, at the town of Loughborough 1

3d DISTRICT.

The hundred of Gartrey — at the town of Harborough 1

4th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Framland, — at the town of MiltonMowbray 1

5th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Goodlaxton, at the town of Lutterworth 1

6th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Sparkingho, at the town of Hinckley — 1

* One is added to this number from the surplus.

LINCOLNSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 252,000.—
 M. P. 12, which are deficient to the number of
 people by 3. This county returns two representa-
 tives on the landed interest; to which number,
 being a large maritime county, may be added an-
 other, taken from the Cinque Ports. It is divided
 into 30 hundreds, containing 630 parishes, and
 may be subdivided into the six following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

	Representatives
The hundreds of Lawris, Lin- coln Liberty, Wraggot, and Gartrey — at	} the city of Lincoln — 3

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Neffe, Ellow Kirton, Aveland, Beltislow, and Afwardburn, — at	} the town of Stamford — 1
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3d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Grantham, Wiverbridge, Loveden, Flax- well, Boothby, and Lango, at	} the town of Grantham — 2
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4th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Skirbeck, Horncastle, Bullingbrook, Candlehow, Hill, and Calce- worth — at	} the town of Boston — 2
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5th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Bradley, Lud- brough, Louthcask, Walsli- croft, and Yarborough, at	} the town of Grimsby — 2
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6th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Corringham, Manlake, Aflacote, and Well, ———— — at	} the town of Grifborough — 2
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MIDDLESEX.—Inhabitants, 1,350,000.—
 M. P. 8. The smallness of this county, and the immense number of people it contains, would seem to obviate this mode for an equal representation, as there is a deficiency in the present return from this county of no less than 59 representatives. The county returns two representatives on the landed interest, and is divided into seven hundreds, containing 200 parishes, and may be sub-divided into the eleven following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

Representatives

The city of London, from the earliest periods of history, has been distinguished by privileges peculiar to itself, and on the mode proposed must stand an exception to the proposed ratio; for agreeably to that it should return forty representatives, which is a proportion, it will readily be allowed, as much too great as the present number are too few, when its population and high importance in the State are duly considered. To reconcile this objection, eight representatives may be assigned to the city of London, to be elected in the usual manner as the livery are in general, a class removed from the lower orders of people.

} the city of London — 8

2d DISTRICT.

Representatives

The parishes within the liberties of Westminster to elect on the general mode proposed, by delegates returned from each parish, which will have this good effect, there never can be again *an age* of electioneering, or *an eternal* scrutiny, and the inhabitants will always have it in their power to elect independent and able men — at } the city of Westminster — 4

3d DISTRICT.

The Kensington division of the hundred of Ossulston — at } the town of Brentford — 2

4th DISTRICT.

The Holborn division of the hundred of Ossulston — at } the town of Hampstead — 2

5th DISTRICT.

The Finsbury division of the hundred of Ossulston — at } the town of Highgate — 2

6th DISTRICT.

The Tower division of the hundred of Ossulston — at } the town of Hackney — 2

7th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Edmonton, at the town of Enfield — 2

8th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Isleworth, at the town of Hounslow — 2

9th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Spelthorne, at the town of Staines — 2

10th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Goare, at the town of Stanmore — 2

11th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Elthorne — at the town of Uxbridge — 2

MONMOUTHSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 42,000.—
 M. P. 4, which are proportionate to the number of
 people. This county returns two representatives
 on the landed interest. It is divided into six hun-
 dreds, containing 127 Parishes, and may be sub-
 divided into the two following districts.

1st DISTRICT:

Representatives

The hundred of Skinfrith,
 Ragland, Trelech, and Calde- } the county town, Monmouth *2
 cōt, ——— at

2d DISTRICT:

The hundreds of Bergavenny, } the town of Abergavenny
 Wenlooge, and Usk — at

* One is added to this number from the surplus.

NORFOLK.—Inhabitants, 285,000.—M. P. 12; which are deficient to the number of people by 4. This county returns two representatives on the landed interest; to which number, being a large maritime county, may be added another, taken from the Cinque Ports. It is divided into 31 hundreds, containing 660 parishes, and may be subdivided into the eleven following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

	Representatives
The hundreds of Taverham, Blowfield, and Humbleyard, _____ at	} the city of Norwich — *4

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Grimshoe, Shropeham, and Gilecrofs, _____ at	} the town of Thetford — 2
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3d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of East Flegg, West Flegg, and Walsham, _____ at	} the town of Yarmouth — 2
---	----------------------------

4th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Freebridge and Clackclose — at	} the town of Lynn Regis — 1
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5th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Greenhoe, Wayland, and Laundich, at	} the town of Swaffham — 1
--	----------------------------

6th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Foreho, Mil- ford, and Eynsford — at	} the town of Wymondham 1
---	---------------------------

7th DI-

7th DISTRICT.

Representatives

The hundreds of North Er-
pington, Holt, and North } the town of Cromer — 1
Greenhoe — at

8th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Disfe, Earls- } the town of Disfe — 1
ham, and Depwade, at

9th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Gallow, } the town of Fakenham — 1
Smethdon, and Brother Crofs, }
at

10th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Loddon, Cla- } the town of Loddon — 1
vering, and Hensted at

11th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Tunsted, Hap- } the town of North Walsham 1
ping, and South Erpington, }
at

* Two are added to this number from the surplus.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 158,000. M. P. 9, which are deficient to the number of people by 1. This county returns two representatives on the landed interest. It is divided into twenty hundreds, containing 326 parishes, and may be subdivided into the six following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

Representatives.

The hundreds of Nafaburgh, Willibrook, Polbrook, Corby, and Navisford — at } the city of Peterborough — 2

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Spelho, New Bott Legrove, and Wimerfleay — at } the county town, Northampton — 2

3d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Higham, Ferris, Huxlow, and Rothwell, — at } the town of Higham Ferrars — 1

4th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Fausley, Warden, and Norton, — at } the town of Daventry — 1

5th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Towcester, Clely, and Sutton — at } the town of Towcester — 1

6th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Hamfordshew, Orlingbury, and Guilesborough — at } the town of Wellingborough — 1

NORTHUM-

NORTHUMBERLAND.—Inhabitants, 142,000.—M. P. 8, which are deficient to the number of people by 1. This county returns two representatives on the landed interest; to which number, being a large maritime county, may be added another, taken from the Cinque Ports. It is divided into seven wards, containing 460 parishes, and may be subdivided into the five following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

Representatives.

The ward of Castle — at the county town, Newcastle *4

2d DISTRICT.

The wards of Islandshire, }
Glendale, and Bamburg, at } the town of Berwick — 2

3d DISTRICT.

The ward of Coquetdale, — at the town of Alnwick — 1

4th DISTRICT.

The ward of Morpeth, — at the town of Morpeth — 1

5th DISTRICT.

The ward of Tindall — at the town of Hexham — 1

* Two are added to this number from the surplus.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 108,000.—
M. P. 8, which are proportionate to the number of
people. This county returns two representatives
on the landed interest. It is divided into six wa-
pöntakes, containing 168 parishes, and may be
subdivided into the five following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

		Representatives	
The wapöntakes of Thurgaston and Ruscliff	— at	}	the county town, Notting- ham ————— } 2

2d DISTRICT.

The wapöntakes of Newark and Bingham,	— at	}	the town of Newark — * 2

3d DISTRICT.

The wapöntake of Broxstow, at the town of Mansfield — 1

4th DISTRICT.

The Hatfield division of Bas- setlaw wapöntake	— at	}	the town of Worktop — 1

The North and South Clay di- vision of Bassetlaw wapön- take	— at	}	the town of East Retford — 1

* One is added to this number from the surplus.

OXFORDSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 128,000.—
 M. P. 9, which are proportionate to the number
 of people. This county returns two representa-
 tives on the landed interest, and two representa-
 tives are returned from the University of Oxford,
 which return may still continue. It is divided into
 14 hundreds, containing 280 parishes, and may be
 subdivided into the five following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

Representatives.

The hundred of Bullington }
 and Wotton, — at } the city of Oxford — *2

2d DISTRICT.

The hundred of Banbury, }
 Bloxham, and Ploughley, at } the town of Banbury — 1

3d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Binfield, }
 Langtree, Ewelin, and Dor- }
 chester — at } the town of Henley — 1

4th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Tame, Lewk- }
 nor, and Pirton, — at } the town of Tame — 1

5th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Bampton and }
 Chadlington — at } the town of Witney — 1

* One is added to this number from the surplus.

RUTLAND-

RUTLANDSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 20,000.—M. P. 2, which are returned by the landed interest only. This county being so very small, one representative may be taken from the landed interest, and be assigned to the commercial, to be elected by delegates from every parish within the county, at the county town, Okeham.

SHROPSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 145,000.—M.P. 12, which give a surplus of 3 above the ratio. This county returns two representatives on the landed interest. It is divided into 15 hundreds, containing 170 parishes, and may be subdivided into the seven following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Shrewsbury and Foord	}	the county town, Shrewsbury *2
_____ at		

Representatives

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Munslow and Overs,	}	the town of Ludlow — *2
_____ at		

3d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Brimsfry and Stottefdon	}	the town of Bridgenorth — 1
_____ at		

4th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Parflow, Clun, and Chirbury,	}	the town of Bishop's castle 1
_____ at		

5th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of North and South Bradford	}	the town of Newport — 1
_____ at		

6th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Wenlock and Cundover	}	the town of Wenlock — 1
_____ at		

7th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Ofwestry and Pimhill,	}	the town of Ofwestry — 1
_____ at		

* One is added to each of these numbers from the surplus.

SOMERSETHIRE.---Inhabitants, 302,000.---
 M. P. 18, which give a surplus of 1 above the
 ratio.--- This county returns two representatives on
 the landed interest; to which number, being a
 large maritime county, may be added another
 taken from the Cinque Ports. It is divided into
 43 hundreds, containing 385 parishes, and may be
 subdivided into the nine following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

	Representatives
The hundreds of Hare Cliff, with Bedminster, Portbury, and Chew _____ at	the city of Bristol — 4

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Bathforum, Keynsham, Wellow, and Chewton _____ at	the city of Bath — 2
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3d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Wellsforum, Winterstoke, Bemstone, and Glaston Hydes — at	the city of Wells — 2
---	-----------------------

4th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Taunton Dean, Andersfield, Kinbury West, Melverton, North Currey, Abdick, and Bulf- don, _____ at	the town of Taunton — 1
---	-------------------------

5th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of North Pether- ton, Connington, Huntspill, with Puriton and Whitley, _____ at	the town of Bridgewater — 2
---	-----------------------------

6th

6th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Frome, Whitstone, Brewton, Norton, Ferrars, and Kilmerfdon, at } the town of Frome — 4

7th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Caerhampton, Wilmington, and Free-manners, — at } the town of Minehead — 1

8th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Tintinhull, Somerton, Martock, South Petherton, Kingsbury, and Crewkhorn — at } the town of Ilchester — 1

9th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Horethorn, Cattesfash, Stone and Yeovil, Berwick, Cocker, and Hunfbero, — at } the town of Milbournport — 1

* One is added to this number from the surplus.

STAFFORDSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 196,000.—
 M. P. 10, which are deficient to the number of
 people by 2. This county returns two representa-
 tives on the landed interest. It is divided into five
 hundreds, containing 130 parishes, each of which
 hundreds may constitute a district.

1st DISTRICT.

The hundred of Offlow, — at the city of Litchfield — ^{Representatives} 2

2d DISTRICT.

The hundred of Cudleston, at the county town, Stafford 2

3d DISTRICT.

The hundred of Seifdon, — at the town of Wolverhampton 2

4th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Totmanslow, at the town of Uttoxeter — 2

5th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Pyrehill — at { the town of Newcastle un- } 2
 der line ————— }

SUFFOLK.—Inhabitants, 202,000.—M. P. 16, which give a surplus of 4. This county returns two representatives on the landed interest; to which number, being a large maritime county, may be added another taken from the Cinque Ports. It is divided into 22 hundreds, containing 575 parishes, and may be subdivided into the nine following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

	Representatives
The hundreds of Carlesford, Colneis, Sampford, and the Liberties of Ipswich, — at	} the town of Ipswich — 2

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Thingow, Thedwastre, and Lackford, at	} the town of St. Edmonds-bury — 2*
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3d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Baberge and Risbridge — at	} the town of Sudbury — 1
--	---------------------------

4th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Stowey and Blackbourn, — at	} the town of Stowmarket — 1
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5th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Loose, Wilford, and Thredling, — at	} the town of Woodbridge — 1
--	------------------------------

6th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Hartesmere and Hoxon — at	} the town of Eye — 1
---	-----------------------

7th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Cosford, Bosmore, and Cleydon, — at	} the town of Hadleigh — 1
---	----------------------------

8th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Plumsgate, and Blithing — at	} the town of Aldborough — 1
--	------------------------------

9th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Wangford and Lothingland — at	} the town of Beckles — 1
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* One is added to this number from the surplus.

SURREY.—Inhabitants, 225,000.—M. P. 14; which give a surplus of one above the ratio. This county returns two representatives on the landed interest. It is divided into 14 hundreds, containing 140 parishes, and may be subdivided into the six following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

	Representatives
The hundred of Brixton,	at the borough of Southwark *4

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Woking,	} the county town, Guildford 2
Chertsey, and Farnham, at	

3d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Kingston and	} the town of Kingston — 2
Emly, ——— at	

4th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Croydon and	} the town of Croydon — 2
Copthorne ——— at	

5th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Ryegate, Dor-	} the town of Ryegate — 2
king, and Tanridge, — at	

6th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Godalming	} the town of Godalming — 1
and Blackheath — at	

* Two are added to this number from the surplus,

SUSSEX.—Inhabitants, 298,000.—M. P. 20, which give a surplus of 3 above the ratio. This county returns two representatives on the landed interest; to which number, being a large maritime county, may be added another, taken from the Cinque Ports. It is divided into 65 hundreds, containing 312 parishes, and may be subdivided into the 12 following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

Representatives

The hundreds of Bosham, West Bourn and Singleton, Manhood, Aldweek, and Dumford ——— at	}	the city of Chichester — 2
---	---	----------------------------

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Barcomb, Dorsett, Loxfield, Rother- field, and Loxfield Baker, at	}	the town of Lewis — 2
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3d DISTRICT.

The hundred of Whalestone, Preston, Youfinere, Fishers, Gater, Burbech, and Pres- ton, ——— at	}	the town of Brighton — 2
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4th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Gueffing, Baldsloe, Bexhill, Nenfield, Battell, and Netherfield, at	}	the town of Hastings — 1
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5th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Goldspur, Staple, Gostrow, Henhurst, and Shoyfwell, — at	}	the town of Rye — 1
--	---	---------------------

6th

6th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Grinstead, }
 Buttinghill, Rushmonden, } the town of East Grinstead
 and Hartfield, — at }

7th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of East Eastwrith, }
 Shinglecross, and Rother- } the town of Horsham — 1
 bridge — at }

8th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of East Bourne, }
 Longbridge, Dill, and Pe- } the town of East Bourne — 1
 fey Liberty and Foxearle, }
 — at }

9th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Avisford, Po- }
 ling, and Brightford, — at } the town of Arundel — 1

10th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Stenning, }
 West Grinstead, Windham, } the town of Stenning — 1
 and Tipnoake, — at }

11th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Eastbourne }
 and West Eastwrith, — at } the town of Midhurst — 1

12th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Willington, }
 Alciston, Totnore, Shiplake, } the town of Seaford — 1
 and Hauxborough — at }

WARWICKSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 198,000.—
M. P. 6, which are deficient to the number of
people by 6. This county returns two representa-
tives on the landed interest. It is divided into
five hundreds, containing 158 parishes, and may
be subdivided into the four following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

Representatives

The hundreds of Knightlow, }
and Coventry county at } the city of Coventry — 3

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Kineton — at the town of Warwick — 2

3d DISTRICT.

The hundred of Hemlingford, at the town of Birmingham 3

4th DISTRICT.

The hundred of Barlichway, { at the town of Stratford on }
Avon ————— } 2

WESTMORELAND.—Inhabitants, 44,000.—
 M. P. 4, which are proportionate to the number
 of people. This county returns two representatives
 on the landed interest. It is divided into four
 wards, containing 26 parishes, and may be sub-
 divided into the two following Districts.

1st DISTRICT.

Representatives

The east and west wards — at the county town Appleby * 2

2d DISTRICT.

The wards of Kendal and Lonf- } the town of Kendal — 1
 dale — at

* One is added to this number from the surplus.

WILTSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 175,000.—M.P. 34, which give a surplus of 23 above the ratio. This county returns two representatives on the landed interest. It is divided into 29 hundreds, containing 304 parishes, and may be subdivided into the seven following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

Representatives

The hundreds of Underditch, Downton, Cawden and Cad- worth, Chalke, and Dau- worth	_____ at	} the city of Salisbury	— 2

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Swanborough, Melksham, Bradford, Whor- welfdon,	_____ at	} the town of Devizes	— 2

3d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Selkley, Ramf- bury, Kingsbridge, and Kin- waston,	_____ at	} the town of Marlborough	* 2

4th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Malmesbury, Highworth, and Damerham,	_____ at	} the town of Malmesbury	— 1

5th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Chippenham, Pottern Canigs, and Calne,	_____ at	} the town of Chippenham	1 1

6th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Amesbury, Elftube and Everley, Branch and Dole	_____ at	} the town of Amesbury	— 1

7th DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Warminster, Westbury, Hatesbury, Da- merham, and Mere,	_____ at	} the town of Warminster	— 1

* One is added to this number from the Surplus.

WORCESTERSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 132,000.—
M. P. 9, which give a surplus of 1 above the ratio.
This county returns two representatives on the
landed interest. It is divided into five hundreds,
containing 152 parishes, and may be subdivided
into the three following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

	Representatives
The hundreds of Worcester and Upton	} the city of Worcester — 2

2d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Blaken, Of- waldeslaw, and Pershore,	} the town of Evesham — 2
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3d DISTRICT.

The hundreds of Halfshire and Doddigtree	} the town of Kidderminster 2
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YORKSHIRE.—Inhabitants, 614,000.—M.P.30. This extensive county returns two representatives on the landed interest; to which number may be added four more, taken from the Cinque Ports, which will give two representatives for each of the three ridings by which the county is divided. It is also divided into 24 wapontakes, containing 563 parishes, and may be subdivided into the nineteen following districts.

1st DISTRICT.

	Representatives
The wapontakes of Bulmer, Ouse and Darwent, and An- sty Liberty, — at	} the city of York — 4

2d DISTRICT.

The wapontake of Skirack, — at the town of Leeds — 2

3d DISTRICT.

The wapontakes of Harthill, Buckrafe, and Hawdenshire, — — at	} the town of Beverley — 2
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4th DISTRICT.

The wapontake of Morley, — at the town of Hallifax — 2

5th DISTRICT.

The wapontakes of Holderness, Dickering, and Kingston county — at	} the town of Hull — 2
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6th DISTRICT.

The wapontakes of and Tickhill	} Strafford — at the town of Sheffield — 2
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7th DISTRICT.

The wapontake of Agbride, at the town of Wakefield — 2

8th DISTRICT.

The wapontake of Barston, — at the town of Pontefract — 2

9th DISTRICT.

The wapontakes of Gilling }
West and Hangwest — at } the town of Richmond — 2

10th DISTRICT.

The wapontake of Hallikeld }
and Hang East — at } the town of Rippon — 2

11th DISTRICT.

The wapontake of Claro, — at the town of Knaresborough 1

12th DISTRICT.

The wapontake of Staincross, at the town of Barnsley — 1

13th DISTRICT.

The wapontake of Osgodcross, at the town of Doncaster — 1

14th DISTRICT.

The wapontakes of Staincliff }
and New Cross — at } the town of Settle — 1

15th DISTRICT.

The wapontake of Pickering, at the town of Scarborough 1

16th DISTRICT.

The wapontake of Burdforth, at the town of Thirsk — 1

17th DISTRICT.

The wapontake of Rydall — at the town of New Malton 1

18th DISTRICT.

The wapontake of Lambargh the town of Guisborough — 1

19th DISTRICT.

The wapontake of Gilling east }
and Allertonshire — at } the town of Northallerton 1

The Principality of Wales, consisting of twelve counties, sends to Parliament twenty-four Representatives; twelve of whom are returned on the landed interest, and twelve by the commercial; which as a province of the State, and of the least importance in the scale of commerce, its products arising chiefly from pasturage, may be considered as equivalent to the number of inhabitants, which are computed at about 320,000. The only arrangement in this principality which may be proposed would be to elect the representatives on the same general mode of delegation as that offered for the Commons of England, and that two representatives be returned from each county to join the Convention proposed for a Parliamentary reform.

Before a mode of reform be offered for a more equal representation in Scotland, it may be useful to state the present mode by which the representatives of the Scottish Burghs are elected, which we learn by an address from a committee of citizens at Edinburgh to the Burgeses and Heritors*.

“ Now we appeal to you, Gentlemen, how far
 “ you enjoy the invaluable privilege of election,
 “ which as British subjects is your birth-right.
 “ Do you elect your representatives in Parliament?
 “ No—The Town Councils are the *sole* electors.
 “ Do you elect the Town Councils? No—The

* P. 13 and 14.

“ Town Councils elect themselves. Thus the
 “ Burgeſſes of Scotland have not the moſt diſtant
 “ connexion with the legiſlative body of the realm.
 “ They have not the moſt *indirect* representation
 “ to Parliament. The Councils are the abſolute
 “ electors both of themſelves and of our repreſen-
 “ tatives in Parliament. Can we then, Gentlemen,
 “ be ſaid to enjoy freedom or the rights of Bri-
 “ tiſh ſubjects? Surely not. We leave it to your-
 “ ſelves, Gentlemen, to judge whether or not this
 “ be our preſent ſituation. Are our repreſenta-
 “ tives in Parliament poſſeſſed of the qualities, or
 “ actuated by the principles of true patriots? Are
 “ they men of capacity and probity? Are they ac-
 “ quainted with the ſtate of our commerce and
 “ manufactures, and attentive to our intereſt in
 “ Parliament? No; intent only on procuring
 “ places and penſions for themſelves and adhe-
 “ rents, they will perhaps never think of the pub-
 “ lic welfare.”

If this be the true ſtate of the representation of
 Scotland, for the honour of their nation, reſpect
 for themſelves, and the fair fame of poſterity, the
 people ſhould never reſt till they had obtained a
 reform, otherwiſe thoſe qualifications which the
 courtly intrigue of theſe laſt thirty years has been
 fixing on them by a few *bowing*, time-ſerving,
 cringing, inſidious, mercenary, perfevering cour-
 tiers, will be conſidered as hereditary.

However

However repugnant to constitutional liberty the present state of the Scottish Burghs may be, arbitrary in their police, and engrossed by an Aristocracy, it has not a necessary relation to the discussion which I have prescribed myself. Their internal police, however partially grievous, does not affect the whole kingdom, for political liberty certainly does not depend upon the particular privileges or sets of this or that Burgh, or any particular cities or towns; on the contrary, they depend on the free enjoyment of this principle by the body of people. It is an universal power spreading over the whole State; it pervades the clay-built hut as well as the stately mansion; it is a vital principle that should be cherished in the bosom of the poorest commoner, and by the body of people should be ever maintained pure for its own sake, and for ever be kept sacred for the blessings of liberty, which it dispenses to all. That so general a power should be prescribed to a local situation, to one part of the State, and not to the other, and confound the distinction between universal freedom and partial slavery, involves an idea which equity and common sense revolts at, and is wholly inimical to the principles of the British Constitution. Upon the leading ones of which, that there is no right without a remedy, and that no individual can be bound but by laws to which he shall have given his consent through
the

the medium of his representatives. There may be added therefore to the ten representatives returned from each county in England two representatives from each county in Scotland, composing a convention sworn to the express and only purpose of establishing an equal and adequate representation of the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament. It may appear unnecessary to repeat, that a reform in Parliament can never be constitutionally effected but upon the principles of political liberty before fully stated. The spirit of the laws of England would be deeply wounded, their texture violated, and the genius of the Constitution utterly destroyed, if in the present Parliament the idea of a supreme and an arbitrary power were confounded. If it can disfranchise one borough, why not all? If it can enact its own existence from three to seven years, why not for a century, or decree itself perpetual. Political liberty is expressly against such an usurpation; no statute can deprive the people of those rights which are in themselves unalienable. The right of choosing representatives to legislate, and the limitation of their existence in that capacity, is an undoubted right of the nation, it is the social right of every man, which no positive law can wrest from him, which our ancestors could not dispose of to the prejudice of their posterity; and if any usurped power should have violated this sacred privilege, or if it should have been surrendered

dered by a corrupt Parliament, it can at any future time be lawfully resumed.

By the Act of Union, the number of representatives from Scotland to the British House of Commons was settled to be 45—thirty of which are returned on the landed interest, and 15 on the commercial. The reason for assigning double the number of representatives to the landed interest was of the same impolicy which has influenced a number of Aristocratic acts since the Revolution. The question of importance between the landed and commercial interest we can be at no loss to decide, when we consider the growing affluence of Scotland wholly arises from its manufactures and commerce; and from this source alone depends the appreciation of land and the consequence of the landholders. As commerce therefore has become the first moving principle in public affairs, and of the highest importance to the State, the mode of reform which may be proposed for Scotland is the following.

That each shire return one representative on the commercial interest, except the small shires of Cromartie, Clackmannan, and Kinross; and that each representative be elected at the principal town within the shire, and be termed member of that town, but to be chosen by the delegates returned
by

by the cessed householders of every parish within the county, as proposed for England.

The delegates of the shire of Cromartie may be added to those of Nairnshire; the delegates of Clackmannan to those of Sterlingshire, and the delegates of Kinross to those of Fifeshire. By uniting these small shires, there will remain an additional representative to be elected at Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen; so that from these capital places may be returned 2 Members each to Parliament. This mode will give 33 representatives on the commercial interest, and leave 12 for the landed interest, to be elected by the freeholders and copyholders, as proposed for England; and these representatives may be returned in the following manner.

The Delegates from the following Shires :

	Representatives
Edinburgh	} to elect at city of Edinburgh 4
Haddington	
Berwick	
Roxborough	
Selkirk	
Peebles	
Dumfries	
Linlithgow	
Fife	
Clackmannan	
Kinross	} to elect at Glasgow — 2
Lanerk	
Wigton	
Air	
Kirkcudbright	
Bute	} to elect at Aberdeen — 2
Renfrew	
Aberdeen	
Kincardine	
Banff	} to elect at Perth — 2
Elgin	
Perth	
Argyle	
Forfar	
Stirling	} to elect at Inverness — 2
Dumbarton	
Inverness	
Nairne	
Cromarie	
Caithness	
Sutherland	
Ross	
Orkney	

That the delegates of the people should be put to no expence in their journies and waste of time to elect the representatives of the nation. Every shire in England, Wales, and Scotland, should, by a county rate, support the expence of elections, as well as the annual stipends which should be allowed to the national representatives during the continuance of a Parliament. On this last subject much has been said, and many are divided in opinion; but to me this observation appears unanswerable—The very texture of the Constitution is constructed on principles productive of a happy medium between the rigid principles of absolute Monarchy and the lax principles of Democracy. The same arguments therefore, taken in a constitutional point of view, will hold good against annual Parliaments as septennial; the first having a tendency to create anarchy, the other leading to arbitrary power; and as these arguments are clearly deducible from every constituent part of the Constitution, no doubt can arise that the industry and wisdom of our ancestors was even directed to the grand object of tempering the two extremes of absolute Monarchy and pure Democracy. The proper medium is therefore

TRIENNIAL PARLIAMENTS.

THE CONCLUSION.

AFTER contemplating the *Theory* of our Constitution, and minutely surveying every part of a beautiful system, erected by the wisdom of ages, to counterpoise the inequality of men, to protect the virtuous from the vicious, the humble peasant from the pampered Peer, we must unite in the sentiments of eminent men of other nations, who adoring the Genius of Liberty which influenced the mind of Britannia, and adopted her the parent of Freedom, have confessed that she has given to the world an emulative and grand system of political economy; a system which is gloriously intended to maintain the dignity of human nature, a system, the genius of which it is to be hoped all nations may in time adopt.

But what must be the feelings, what must be the deep concern of the present age, to find this beautiful fabric has diverged by *practice* from that independence in its constituent parts which is its vital principle, and decayed in its stamina by a fundamental grievance in the representation of the
people?

people? The violation of the freedom of election, and the independence of Parliament, being universally acknowledged, should be with unanimity immediately remedied. Let not an enlightened people foster on posterity an evil, which increasing, may afford them no atonement but in the general execration of this, as a time-serving, corrupt, and degenerate age.

A partial reform of the rotten boroughs, and the neglect of a general organization of the elective power of the people, will be attended with the same effects. The first may give a colourable independence, but it will never produce that essential principle necessary to preserve the freedom of the Constitution, to maintain the independence of the people from the abuse of power, and to check that tide of luxury which is sapping the vitals of the State, and which will be the most formidable enemy the freedom of Britain ever had to encounter. Her arms deceive the eye, captivate the senses, indulge the passions, subdue reason, and triumph over reflection, enervate and weaken the powers of the Constitution, and sink a nation into vice and infamy. It was this which was both the cause of the splendor and decadency of the Roman Empire. It was this which rendered the Romans incapable of maintaining their liberties; and as every effect proceeds from a cause,

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nations,

nations, like men, rise, flourish, and decay ; and doubtful would be the assertion, if a man shall say, we shall avoid a similar fate.

The true spirit of liberty is the real spirit of the Constitution ; and every man whose bosom glows with this noble flame, disdains the spirit of faction ; his heart exults in proud allegiance to that Supreme Power which guaranties his personal security and private property. No greater wound can his feelings receive, than when stern necessity calls him forth to resist the abuse of a power created for his happiness. His loyalty to his Sovereign, his attachment to the laws, and reverence for order, conspire to render him passive and forbearing ; and in the hope of a change of men, of measures, and of time, he often suffers anticipation of better days to supersede the energy of present vindication. But there is a time when even hope no longer can find a point to rest her fostering wing ; those times have frequently occurred in the History of JOHN BULL ; but the unity of his powers, and the energy of his spirit, have ever regained the equilibrium ; and he has taught the arbitrary Monarch, and the ambitious Aristocrat, that their only security and interest is in the due exercise of their privileges, prescribed by the laws ; and that he himself, by knowing how to yield a grateful submission to a wise Government,

vernment, has convinced all the world that he is capable of securing and enjoying the highest possible degree of human Liberty and social Freedom.

F I N I S.

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